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8 TRINITY ROAD
LONDON N2 8JJ, ENGLAND

Editorial: 020 8444 2002
Advertising: 020 8444 3003
Accounts/subs: 01621 877231
Fax: 020 8883 0302
E-mail: Comics@Quality.win-UK.net
Website: http://www.comics-international.com

From N America tel: 01144 20 8444 2002
Fax: 011 44 20 8883 0302

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SEZ DEZ

WHENEVER I meet up with old friends, an inevitable early question is about what I'm up to these days. Imagine attempting to describe **CI** to somebody outside of our little world. "Well, it's a trade paper. About what? Oh, uh... Comics. Yeah, **Beano**, **Batman**. That kinda stuff." This is generally followed by their mock gasps, guffaws and derisive suggestions about what stories we run on Wonder Woman and Superman's private lives.

But it is tough to summarise what we do, and why we actually do it. It's not vanity publishing or a fanzine, it actually keeps half a dozen people gainfully employed and attempts to be po-faced and non-judgemental, however ludicrous, unimaginative or derivative some of the creative concepts that we cover may be.

I guess we can be described best by the remark most often heard from our readers, that we keep people up to date on what's happening across the industry. As TV's Richard Wilson put it, and I paraphrase, "There are so many comics out there, I jut don't have time to read them all. **Comics International** sums it all up for me."

But it's not always easy.

One Marvel editor told me recently that he couldn't give us any information on a new project we'd heard about "until it is solicited". Image Comics has gone over to join DC (and Marvel) with an embargo on all news "until the book is solicited".

Notice a pattern beginning to emerge here? It isn't news until the publisher wants his print order. Bad enough there's only one distributor worldwide for the major comicbook publishers, now product news is being monopolised too!

But this is insane. The publishers are playing into the distributor's hands... Not everybody wants to pay $2.95 to buy a catalogue where the news is hyperbole written by the publishers themselves. We still report the news, in our first allowable issue after the embargo is lifted. But what if it's an expensive item, or a major new title? The retailer won't risk too many overorders, and the potential customer has only a few days to pick up the industry's ordering catalogue, **Diamond Previews**, read about the item, and order it from his retailer.

Whereas we can provide background info, quotes direct from the creators and zoom in on major new launches without bias. As a retail aid, we make the shop's life easier. And the reader, and the publisher. If somebody knows enough about a new title long enough in advance, they can order it. No losers, not even the sales of **Diamond Previews**. It's called build-up, anticipation. It's to everybody's benefit.

And it's one good reason why we're here.

Comics International editor Dez Skinn's career in the industry spans 30 years. Titles he has created include ***Doctor Who Weekly***, ***House of Hammer***, ***Hulk Comic***, ***Starburst*** *and* ***Warrior***. *Ex-editorial director of Marvel UK – where his Stan Lee-coined Sez Dez column had a monthly audience of over 500,000 – he has also edited titles including* ***MAD Magazine***, ***Buster***, ***Conan***, ***Star Wars Weekly***, ***2000 AD Presents***, ***Judge Dredd*** *and* ***Spider-Man*** *and won over 20 Eagle Awards. His co-created* ***V for Vendetta*** *is currently optioned to Warner Bros.*

Batgirls, zombies and Ghost

ABOVE: Ryan Benjamin's cover art for ***Ghost/Batgirl*** *#1.*

GHOST'S own series may be coming to an end but the self-proclaimed Sentinel of Arcadia is bowing out in style.

On August 30, Dark Horse is launching a four-part series that brings the final superhero from its World's Greatest Comics line into a confrontation with two of DC's top heroines.

In a story by **Ghost** writer Mike Kennedy, Barbara Gordon and Cassandra Cain travel to Arcadia. They are seeking to discover how and why dead Gothamites are being resurrected as zombies on Ghost's home turf.

But the wheelchair-bound Gordon – now the computer wizard known as Oracle – and her successor as Batgirl are viewed as competition by the spectral avenger who has her own reasons for wanting to discover the source of the walking dead.

Writer Kennedy told **CI**, "This is a great opportunity to bring the industry's most dynamic female characters together and look at how each of them approach heroism and mortality. And who better to tackle those subjects than a gun-toting ghost and a teenaged assassin?

"I'm really excited about crossing these audiences," he continued. "I really hope that Bat-fans will find this darker approach to Batgirl exciting and also discover a rabid interest in Ghost – an incredibly underrated and charismatic character who deserves more attention.

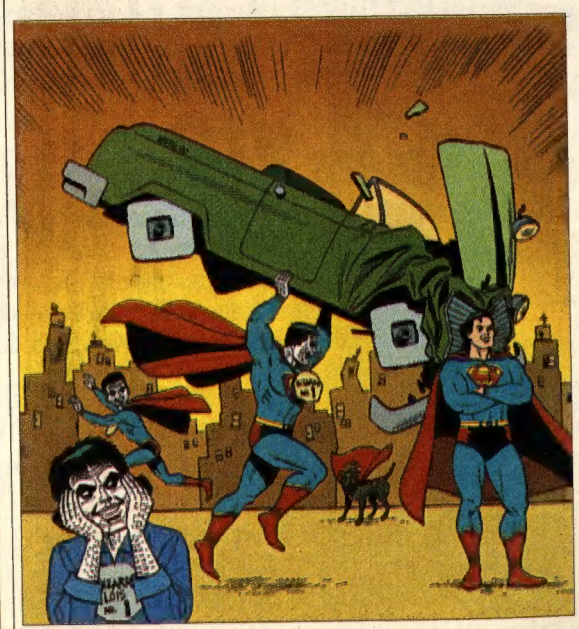
"So aside from writing an intriguing mystery with great moral dilemma and character development, I'm hoping to showcase a couple of hidden gems," Kennedy added.

The writer also explained that the story deals with a conspiracy within Arcadia to steal and revive the recently deceased.

"Gotham thus far has been the best resource for dead bodies," he added. "This of course draws the attention of not only Batgirl and Oracle but Ghost as well. A few of these re-living turn out to be deceased foot soldiers of Two-Face, so – in the midst of his own personal trauma – he gets involved as well."

Joining Kennedy on the $2.95 **Ghost/Batgirl** is his **Ghost** collaborator, artist Ryan Benjamin.

DC collects its stories from a square world



ABOVE: Jaime Hernandez's cover artwork for DC's ***Superman: Tales of the Bizarro World*** *trade paperback.*

DC'S LATEST **Superman** collection is being aimed at two distinct markets.

Not only does the 192-page **Tales of the Bizarro World** cater to the older fan but it maximises on the potential of DC's extensive back catalogue by reprinting Silver Age material that will also appeal to readers of the current Superman titles.

Set on the square planet where the credo is "Us do opposite of all Earthly things", the stories in this $14.95 trade paperback are written by Superman co-creator Jerry Siegel. Drawn by Wayne Boring and John Forte, they are reprinted from **Adventures Comics** #285-295 [1961-1962].

Superman: Tales from the Bizarro World ships on August 30 and ties in with DC's recently announced *Superman: Emperor?* serial.

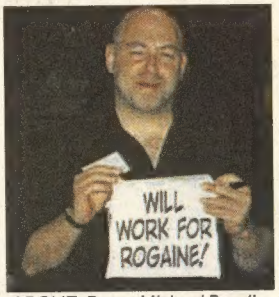
Marvel reinvents Spider-Man and X-Men in bid to expand market

Ailing comics giant hires indie writer to make top-selling characters attractive to younger audience via fresh start

THERE have been many attempts to expand upon Spider-Man and the X-Men popularity including manga-style, TV animated look, 2099 future versions, deaths, costume and cosmetic changes and various **What If** incarnations.

Now vice-president of Marvel New Media Bill Jemas believes eradicating continuity is key to making Marvel's superheroes more accessible. He commented, "Our characters have been around for almost 40 years and most of the fans are older." Whether he mistakenly meant Marvel readers are aged 40+ remains unclear. He continued, "The adventures have been building on one another for decades, so it is impossible for a new reader to pick up one issue and understand what's going on."

Believing this to be a fault of longevity rather than poor soap opera style writing, Jemas also maintains "We think that teenagers today want a character they can relate to, one that lives in the same world they do."



ABOVE: Bryan Michael Bendis.

Ultimate Marvel

Despite strong criticism of the rejuvenated Spider-Man in the current titles, his solution is to start again, reinventing the characters for today's market.

"That's how we ended up with the Ultimate Marvel project," he announced. "We want comics that today's teenagers can call their own.

"We're starting over with Spider-Man and the X-Men in September and eventually expect to relaunch all of our major characters," Jemas optimistically continued.

Hedging his bets by stressing that – unlike DC's total commitment when recreating icons – Marvel is not replacing any of its current Spider-Man or X-Men series with Ultimate Marvel titles. Jemas added that the lines will run parallel but with each readily distinguishable from the other. Seemingly creating confusion rather than removing such, Ultimate Marvel comics will be set in a reality separate from that of the existing Marvel titles.

Instead of John Byrne or any other well-established – and invariably older – spin doctor, Marvel has turned to Brian Michael Bendis, a 32-year-old, who entered the industry 10 years ago.

Responsible for a number of acclaimed series including his own **Torso** – currently being developed as a movie – and the continuing **Sam and Twitch** for Image/Todd McFarlane Productions, Bendis is also writing his own Image title, **Powers**, and has **Hellspawn** in preparation.

Send for Bendis

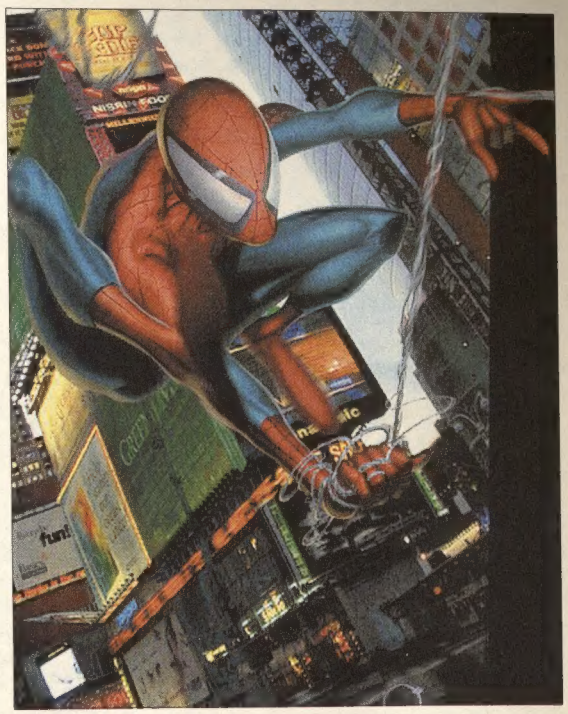
Speaking about his Ultimate Marvel work, the writer said, "Marvel called and asked if I wanted to do Spider-Man and I jumped at it!"

He added, "They gave me the basic material they wanted in the series and told me to write it. I did it my way, the way I've always thought it should be done. I guess they liked it because they then offered me X-Men!"

Jemas explained he and Marvel editor Bob Harras would continue to contribute ideas and plots to the Spider-Man title and allow Bendis to write the stories.

Jemas, adding that he believes realism will be a key to the success of the project and that characters need to be believable and relevant, said that he, Harras and X-Men line editor Mark Powers will be contributing to the X-Men series as well.

A first look at the Ultimate Marvel Spider-Man (top right) and Wolverine (above); art by Joe Quesada.



Spider-Man

In the Ultimate Marvel title, Spider-Man's alter ego will still be Peter Parker but with the youngster an intern at the **Daily Bugle**.

Bendis was fortunately able to throw out one early idea – to make Parker a web designer with the on-line version of the paper. "I've been around newspapers long enough to know that there is no way a 15-year-old is going to hold an important job," he remarked. "That's why I made him an intern, that's believable."

Although, eventually, he will don a recognisable version of the familiar red and blue Spider-suit, Parker will modify and accessorise it as he goes along.

This reality will have its Aunt May but not another aged mother substitute. She is, instead, in touch with the problems of youth, dragging Parker off to hospital to be tested for Turret's Syndrome when his spider-sense makes him twitch nervously. Jemas added that Spider-Man's major foe will be the Ultimate version of the original Green Goblin, Norman Osborn.

The series is being drawn by Mark Bagley, penciller of Marvel's **Amazing Spider-Man** from 1991 to 1996.

Ultimate X-Men

Jemas and Bendis said they are much further along with developing the Spider-Man comic than the new X-Men title. However, it is definite that Cyclops, Phoenix, Rogue, Gambit and Storm will form the core of the Ultimate mutant group.

Wolverine and Professor X will also be part of the X-Men but, despite Wolverine being the most popular team member, their roles will be significantly different from those familiar to readers of the Marvel Universe X-titles.

"Wolverine won't always be around, when he is it will be special," said Bendis. "I want him to be much more mysterious."

Jemas added that the costumes the characters will wear will be closer to the ones in the forthcoming *X-Men* movie than to those in the current X-comics.

No artist has yet been assigned to the X-Men series.

12 million freebies

Underscoring his desire to see the project succeed, Jemas said Marvel plans to distribute 12 million free preview comics through promotions with fast food and other outlets and as incentives with Marvel toys and electronic games.

Copies of this special are also being given away at US cinemas showing the *X-Men* movie in July.

Whether traditional news-stand outlets will be used to retain this massive new potential audience has not been stated, but comic shop readers – the older fans – are sure to favour the originals.

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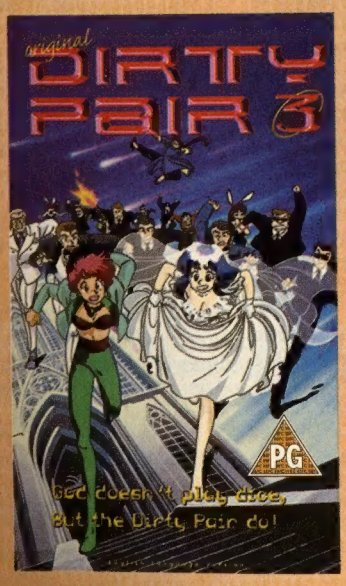

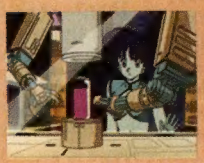

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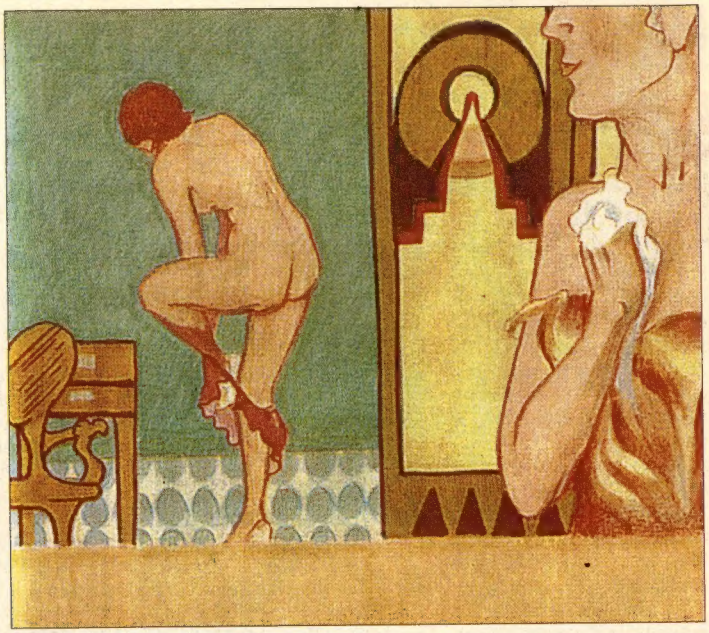


Lost Girls found by Top Shelf

Alan Moore to conclude his unfinished saga of fictional heroines and sexual exploration in 2001

BEFORE he launched **The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen**, Alan Moore began a very different kind of story featuring other well-known characters from literature.

In his proposed 240-page **Lost Girls**, the Eagle Award-winning writer united adult versions of **Peter Pan**'s Wendy, Alice from **Alice in Wonderland** and Dorothy from **The Wizard of Oz**.

Set in 1913, one is sexually repressed, another an opium addict and the third a giggling good-time girl. In a Swiss hotel not far from Lake Constance, the three women meet and tell erotic versions of their famous stories.

Begun in 1991 as a serial in **Taboo** #5, **Lost Girls** was picked up by Kitchen Sink. It launched the title in 1995 but published only two issues.

Now Top Shelf Productions has acquired the rights to what publisher Chris Staros describes as a story that

*ABOVE: Top Shelf Productions publisher Chris Staros with writer Alan Moore and his **Lost Girls** collaborator, artist Melinda Gebbie.*

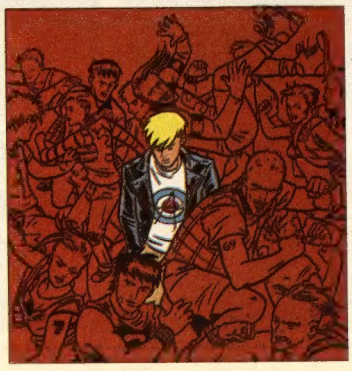
"attempts to reinvent pornography as something exquisite, thoughtful, and human. For women. For men."

With only 56 pages seen to date, Top Shelf is planning to issue the complete 240-page saga in three hardcover volumes, beginning in autumn 2001.

Lost Girls is painted by Melinda Gebbie, Moore's collaborator on *Cobweb* in **Tomorrow Stories**, his America's Best Comics anthology.

Prose novel relaunches Crazyfish

ONI PRESS editor-in-chief Jamie S. Rich is taking time away from his editorial duties to assist C. Scott Morse in the relaunch of Crazyfish/MJ-12, the animator's comics line.



The publisher returns in July with the digest-sized **Cut My Hair**. Written by Rich, this 248-page novel tells of Mason, a punk whose lifestyle threatens to ruin his life. The $14.95 book contains illustrations by a number of Oni contributors including Morse, Judd Winick and Andi Watson. **Madman**'s Michael Allred provides cover art *[left]*.

Also shipping from Crazyfish in July is the black and white **Smack Dab**. An 88-page digest – priced $8.50 – it reprints strips contributed by **Soulwind** creator Morse to various anthologies in the late '90s.

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The last Wolverine story?

Argentinian artist joins Joseph Harris for graphic novel starring older version of Marvel's most popular mutant

ABOVE: Argentinian artist Enrique Breccia depicts the future Wolverine for the forthcoming graphic novel written by Joseph Harris.

JOSEPH Harris is to further explore the possible future Marvel Universe he created for **Bishop: The Last X-Man** in a new 64-page **Wolverine** graphic novel.

Discussing the project with **CI**, the writer said, "If I had to tell you what this graphic novel is going to be about, without giving away too much this early on, I'd have to say it's about the measure of a man's life.

"We're going to tell what may well be *The Last Wolverine Story*," Harris added. "He's a character that has been through everything in life."

He continued, "But by the time our story catches up with him, we find he's been through a hell of a lot more. He's lived longer than any man should have to. He's watched his enemies grow old and die. He's buried many of his friends himself. He's tired. He's lonely. He'd love nothing more than to rest, finally. And to end the fight he's been having with the world all his life.

"But he can't," Harris explained. "Not yet. A lot's happened to Wolverine since the fall of the X-Men. He's made friends, deals, and – of course – plenty of enemies."

Bishop's future

The writer continued, "He's going to die soon. But not before undertaking one last quest. The fate of the future, as well as the entire world, hangs in the balance. And we're promising the readers one hell of a ride."

Harris said that the book takes place in the same future he is currently detailing in **Bishop: The Last X-Man**.

"It's a rich future, devoid of technology and quite short on hope," he remarked. "The dream died a long time ago, but if you look hard enough you can find it in the corners keeping the darkest shadows at bay.

"Bishop will make an appearance, although the book will be written with the casual reader in mind, as well as the diehard fan," he said.

Editor Jason Liebig added, "You're going to see Wolverine at a very late time in his life, and although we've seen potential future versions of Wolverine, we hope this one will be as true to the character as possible... While also expanding on what it means for a man like this to outlive just about everyone he's ever known."

Enrique Breccia

Currently scheduled for late this year, the project is fully painted by Enrique Breccia.

Despite being well-known in South America and Europe, the one-shot is the Argentinian artist's first high-profile American work.

● Tim Truman and Chuck Dixon's 4Winds Publishing released **Alva Mayor** – a translated Breccia graphic novel – in the US in 1989.

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CAPTAIN Marvel *writer Peter David transforms the yet-to-be Mr Fantastic into an Indiana Jones-like adventurer in Marvel's* ***Before the Fantastic Four: Reed Richards****. The $2.99 three-parter involves the young scientist in a race to find the mysterious Claw of Bast. Vying with him for possession of this ancient artifact with amazing healing power is a recently scarred Victor Von Doom. Duncan (****Totems****) Fegredo illustrates the series which launches on July 26.*

Pram-pushing ronin's return

DARK Horse is planning to make the entire **Lone Wolf and Cub** saga available to the English-speaking world.

Kazuo Kioke and Goseki Kojima's influential manga was originally published in the US by First Comics but only 45 translated issues of the black and white comic were released between 1987 and 1991.

Beginning on August 30, Dark Horse is launching a monthly series of 28 trade paperbacks which will make the entire epic available in English for the first time. Each 4 x 6" volume runs to 296 black and white pages and is priced $9.95.

Kozure Yokami [Wolf and Child] is **Lone Wolf and Cub**'s Japanese title. A saga of revenge, it ran to 8,500 pages (28 volumes) when originally published in Japan's **Manga Action** between 1970 and 1976.

The epic focuses on Itto Ogami, the Shogunate's official executioner. Falling foul of the Yagyu clan, he becomes an outlaw assassin, travelling Japan pushing his infant son along in a wooden pram.

Batman: The Dark Knight Returns creator Frank Miller cites **Lone Wolf and Cub** as one of his influences, with his **Ronin** [1983] obviously inspired by it. He is quoted as saying that each chapter of the manga describes "in terms, vastly unlike our own, what it is that makes a perfect warrior, even as it examines his ultimate futility and the utter tragedy of war."

Miller drew the covers to the initial 12 issues of the First series and these are also being used on Dark Horse's editions.

● Enormously successful in Japan, **Lone Wolf and Cub** gave rise to numerous spin-offs including songs, a TV series and six feature films.

Dubbed and re-edited versions of movies from this *Swords of Vengeance* series were released in the US and UK as *Lightning Swords of Death* [1974] and *Shogun Assassin* [1980].

ABOVE: Frank Miller and Lynn Varley's cover artwork for the first volume in Dark Horse's ***Lone Wolf and Cub*** *trade paperback series.*

DC's top team "spooked"

Nocturnals creator tackles JLA in one-shot homage to Howard and Lovecraft

DAN BRERETON is not a name readily associated with that modern day mainstay of the comics industry, the superhero. Instead, he has carved himself a different reputation, one involving his painted art and his love of all things supernatural.

His latest assignment – a one-shot starring DC's best-selling superteam – allows him to indulge both.

Brereton is writing and illustrating **JLA: 7 Caskets**, a 48-page prestige format special that will not see print until late this summer at the earliest. Intending the story as a homage to his favourite two authors – Robert E. Howard and H. P. Lovecraft – the writer/artist told **CI** that it also "owes much to the original '60s series feel of the JLA and the way those early issues colourfully illustrated the concept of teamwork and unity, but in a setting more akin to the comics I love to do."

Spooked-up

"The project has a very Lovecraftian/Moorcock bent, replete with ghosts, ancient pre-human races, a sleeping chaos god, etcetera," the writer/artist continued.

"Oh, and also the JLA get the Brereton treatment, so they'll be *spooked-up* at some point in the story as well," he added.

Lords of Misrule

The story focuses on the resurrection of seven undead, inhuman warrior-kings from a bygone age before Man. They seek to control an elder chaos force awakening deep within the Earth.

"As elder spirits and forces are unleashed upon the world, the JLA is powerless against these lords of misrule," he explained.

"Aquaman will get a little more play in this story, as a sort of keeper of ancient and better-kept-in-the-dark secrets of the deep," stated Brereton. "I've become fascinated with the idea of this King of the Sea, and all the wondrous and terrible things he must be forced to keep under wraps, even from his fellow Leaguers."

Brereton added, "The project boasts lots of dark, spooky, monstrous fun, lost continents and cities, dark sorcery and wicked villains. The JLA is forced to into a major decision whether or not to accept a dark and ancient chaotic gift of power in order to save the world from being reclaimed by the spectral forces that once held it in darkness before Man had even left the trees," he continued.

ABOVE: ***Nocturnals*** *creator Dan Brereton's promotional artwork for his* ***JLA: 7 Caskets*** *one-shot.*

"It's the kind of fun and games you'd expect from me, only with the Justice League," Brereton remarked. "I'm really enjoying working with the big guns; a lot of work went into the crafting of the story."

JLA as monsters

He continued, "I think my editor was afraid that some people might see this project as simply an excuse for me to do the JLA as monsters or something, but we both made sure there was a solid and intriguing story guiding it all."

Brereton concluded, "I'm really excited to be doing it, especially since I baulked at the idea of doing a JLA book when [editor] Dan Raspler first asked me to consider trying my hand at one."

Nocturnals

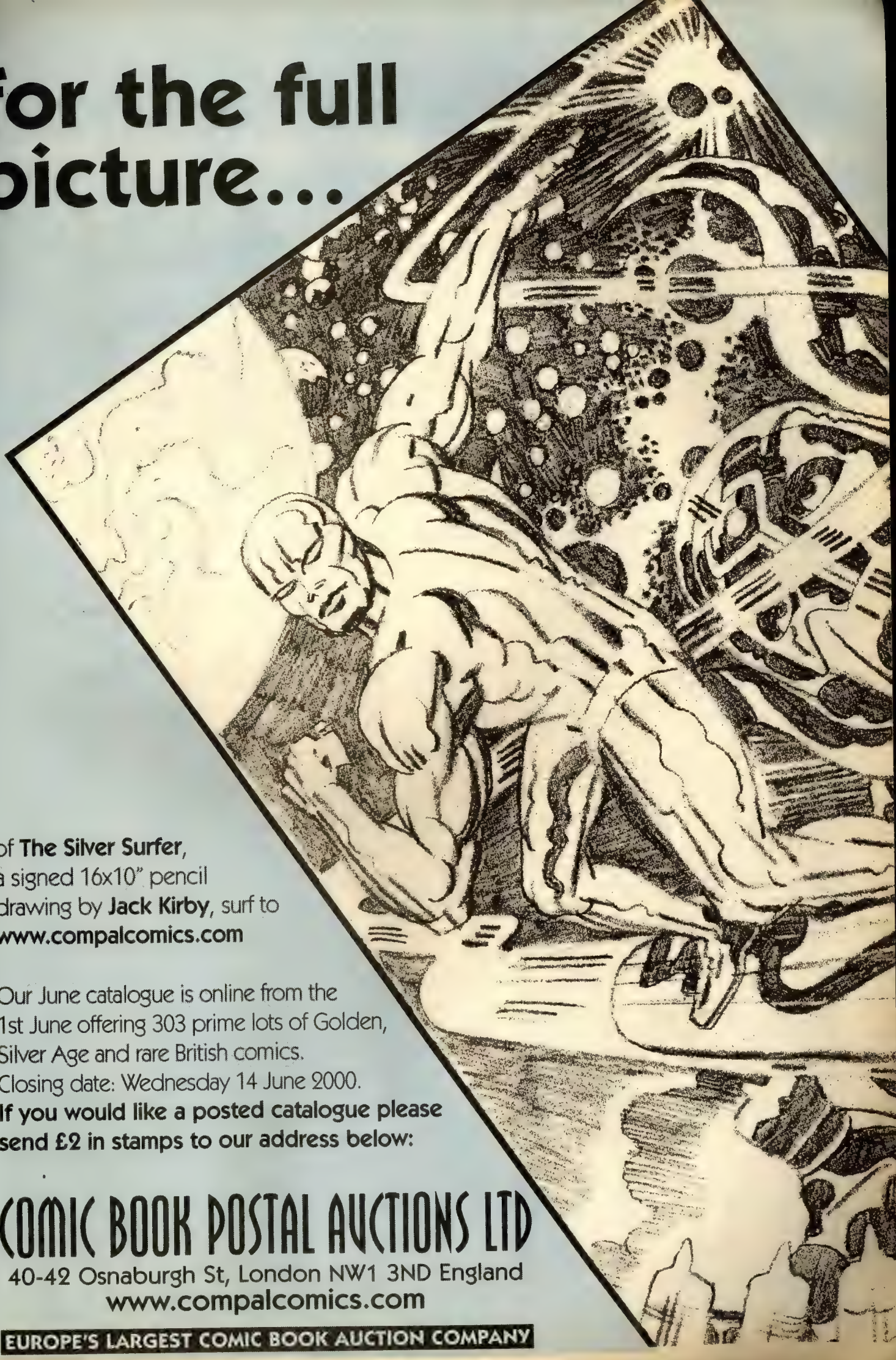
Brereton is probably best-known for **Nocturnals**, a pulp-influenced series he introduced in 1995 at Bravura, Malibu's short-lived creator-owned imprint.

The newest appearance of his monstrous creations will be in **Nocturnals: The Troll Bridge**, a 48-page special from Oni. However, the title of this Halloween one-shot could change to **Nocturnals: Black White and Orange** to reflect the colours used.

The $4.95 comic will contain a single story drawn by Brereton, Jill Thompson and Arthur Adams among others. Bruce Timm provides one of the flip-book's covers.

ABOVE: Dan Brereton's art for a **Nocturnals** *t-shirt planned by Fanboy Entertainment.*

for the full picture...



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Counter-X phase two reveals secrets of missing six months

Writers Brian Wood, Steven Grant and Ian Edginton discuss plans for ***Generation X, X-Force*** *and* ***X-Man***

ALTHOUGH still too early to tell if the Warren Ellis-plotted relaunches of **Generation X**, **X-Force** and **X-Men** will provide any long-lasting boost to sales, Marvel is already moving ahead with the second phase in its *Counter-X* programme.

Editor Jason Liebig exclusively told **CI**, "We're starting the second four-issue story arcs for *Counter-X*, and as part of our plan, Warren Ellis is stepping back from his involvement – only providing tight plot outlines for the books, and leaving more responsibility to the scripters from the first arc.

"We're calling this second story arc *Counter-X: Shockwave*," he added. "The reason for the *Shockwave* title is to represent the wave of change that transformed the books into their current incarnations. We're explaining what happened during the six-month gap between the February issues of each title and the March issues. I think it's going to be a very rewarding batch of stories for fans and I hope it will answer some of the burning questions that many of them have been asking since we began in March.

"I also hope that we can convince them that these books have changed for the better from now on, rather than just for a few months. That is my mission, anyway," he concluded.

Brian Wood discusses Generation X

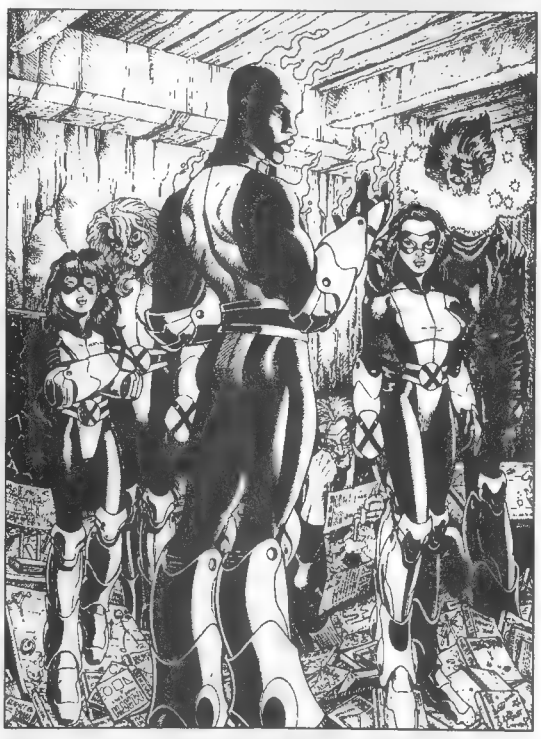
"*SHOCKWAVE* is where we basically go back in time six months and tell the awful story behind all the damage and mystery and sadness and changes that we introduced at the beginning of the first arc. What happened during this time has changed all the kids dramatically – for better and for worse. It's safe to say that they will never be the same again.

Things to look forward to in this arc include the story of what happened to Synch (as well as Penance, Artie and Leech), a new romance (ooh!), the return of Adrienne Frost, the story behind the destruction of the Massachusettes Academy and why it's been closed off to the normal students. And more, of course, but I am not about to spoil it for anyone.

Basically, all the questions that the first arc raised will be answered in this second arc, and hopefully to everyone's satisfaction.

On a more personal level, this has been a great experience for me. Working with Warren was a treat, but I am really looking forward to being on my own here, and really doing what I feel needs to be done with this book.

When I was preparing for this job, doing research and wotnot, I read pretty much the entire run of the series. Well, at least 40 issues!



ABOVE: Arthur Adams' cover artwork for **Generation X** #67.

Getting inside their heads

One thing that really stood out to me was a near lack of any sort of in-depth look into the heads of the Gen X kids. There were plenty of fight scenes and some fun and silly stories where they were just kids being kids, and that's fine. But what attracted me to these characters in the first place was who they actually are.

What do they feel? Why do they act the way they act? What does it feel like to be young and different and alienated from the rest of society? A society that hates you because of the way you look. It's been touched on in the past, but never to a degree that I feel is required.

I've also noticed in the past three months that whenever Warren and I would include a short sequence, or a line of dialogue that did get into this sort of area, fans would immediately respond. Quite positively, in fact.

So that's what I'm looking to do. So far it's been great, and I hope people like what I do.

Steve Pugh is great, by the way. I've been a fan of his for years, and to be able to work with both him and Warren on my first project in the big leagues is really almost too much to ask for."

Steven Grant on X-Man

"THE *Revolution* story in **X-Man** #63-67 was an introductory arc, to give the audience a sense of the new Nate Gray. We purposely didn't refer to how he changed or why, it was only important he had.

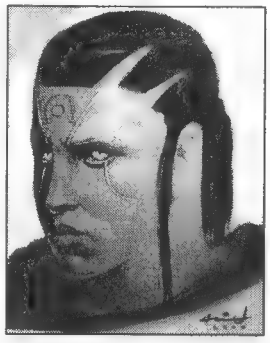
Nate had been a fairly traditional Marvel hero, an outsider pining for a place to belong, etcetera. Your basic Spider-Man mould. Warren, Ariel, Jason, Tim and I just twisted the equation a bit. He's now an outsider who's perfectly happy being an outsider. Unalienated.

He has a much better sense of the scope of his own power, he feels he has a role to play. He's something of a busybody, he wants to stop problems before they become critical, and maintain sort of a natural balance.

Hence the *shaman* routine. He views mutantdom as his tribe and has taken on the roles that fell to shamans in ancient tribes. Warding off demons and mediating with other spheres, auguring the future, healing the sick, attaining different states of consciousness, that sort of thing. Traditional shamans lived apart from the tribes they served. In a way, it was the equivalent of maintaining a professional distance, objectivity.

The *Shockwave* arc takes place in the six months prior to *Revolution*, and tells the story of how that Nate became this Nate, what happened to him, how he was trained and why.

Many people have been asking what happened to Maddy Pryor. At the beginning of *Revolution*, a Forge is killed on an Earth not our own, and many have been puzzled by that as well. It all ties into *Shockwave*, which answers all these



ABOVE, top and right: Ariel Olivetti's early designs for Qabiri, a major new X-Man foe.

Ian Edginton talks about Shockwave and X-Force

"*SHOCKWAVE* is a period of transition for both me and the characters in the book. Warren has taken a step back, no longer plotting X-Force, but I'm working from his detailed outlines so he's still a distinct presence.

The hand of Ellis will still be evident but I get to flex my muscles and do what he brought me in to do which is crank up the volume some and mess around with a little corner of the X-Universe and annoy people.

Screw you...

Actually that's what this book's about; annoying people. It's about pushing back. It's about a bunch of mutants going "Screw you, I'm mutant, you want to make something of it?!" Sort of. I don't want people to get comfortable or complacent.

I think Warren's last plotted issue will definitely get people's attention. Let's put it this way, not everyone survives the issue and Marvel's taken the bold step of making it quite clear that those who don't live into the *Shockwave* arc will not be coming back in this life!

I've read complaints about characters not acting the same as before. Well I'm sorry, that's too bad but people grow up! I take the view that *Counter X* X-Force is the equivalent of them leaving university let's say, and having to make their way in the real world.

You become more aware of a wider world and your part in it. Decisions and choices are complex, and impact on others beside yourself. For mutants like Sam, Tabby, Jesse and James – dear God, that makes them *Pokemon*'s Team Rocket! – they've had a moment of clarity in which they realised they don't want to pretend to be human and fit in any more.

They have god powers and if someone nasty pisses them off they can snap them over their knees. They have the power and potential to start putting the world to rights, which is what they intend to do.

And, yes before anyone says that's similar to what Warren and Mark [Millar] are doing in **The Authority**, the concept's not a new one. Try reading the later issues of Alan Moore's **Miracleman**, just for the splendid scene where our hero takes over the running of England from a bullish but impotent Margaret Thatcher.

Mutant outsiders

Shockwave sees what's left of the team picking themselves up out of the ashes of their pyrrhic victory. They have to regroup and rethink. They had their bright, shiny new plan and got knocked back, people died. Now what? Do they carry on?

The fact that they are the outsiders of Marvel's mutant fraternity really hits home. They have crossed a line and are on their own when it comes to associating with the other big mutant teams. When they're in a pinch, there won't be any cavalry coming. They've burned their bridges.

But that doesn't mean they are all alone. They're moving through a shadowy black ops world and make new friends and enemies alike, some being one and the same. It's a whole new learning curve for them and us. They'll pull together tighter as a team and their character development will become deeper and richer as a result. What's gone before was just fun and games. This is real, and for the rest of their lives.

Because this arc also fills in the lost six month gap, we discover why certain team members are missing, that the split wasn't entirely amicable and that former friends have the potential to be the deadliest enemies.

We also learn how they adapt their powers into new forms or got whole new ones such as James Proudstar being able to fly which, Marvel permitting, turns into a juicy storyline later this year."

ABOVE: A view from the grave – Whilce Portacio's cover artwork for the $2.25 X-Force #106, shipping on July 26.

questions. *Shockwave* begins with Nate doing something very, very bad, and things go wild from there.

Before we're done, we reveal more about the nature of the Spiral, bring the Forge and Maddy Pryor threads into focus and tie them together, and establish once and for all Nate's true nature, which directly leads him to his new telekinetic mutant shaman role.

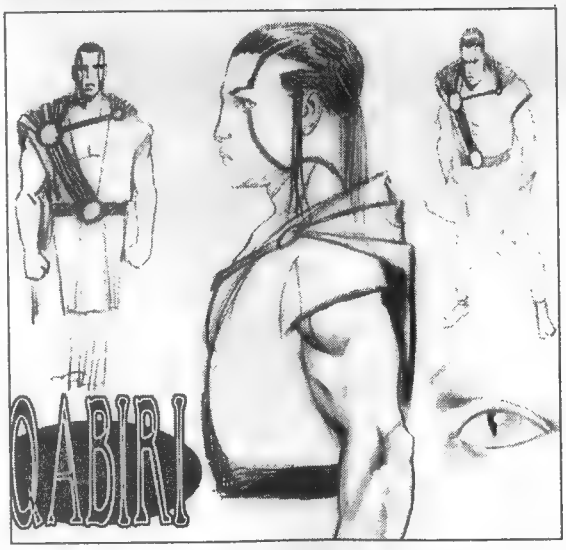
The story also introduces – in cameo – the being I hope will become Nate's archnemesis. He's the extreme opposite of the Broken Man from *Revolution*, and I think he has the potential to be a major Marvel villain in general, though obviously I have no control over that.

No Superman

Meanwhile, we're also going to be exploring the limits of Nate's power.

Many readers seem to think we've established him as near omnipotent, but that's not so. He's going to find out exactly how not omnipotent he is. We hinted at that some in *Revolution*.

He's not Superman, he can't just keep going and going. His body can only take so much, his mind can only take so much. He has to have a clear idea of what he's doing to be effective, and then he has to have considerable concentration.



Shockwave will show a couple of different possibilities for Nate. Talking about the plot would give too much away, but it brings together all the threads we've set up so far, and when you see it put together, it all makes sense.

My role on the book increases with *Shockwave*. While Warren's still masterminding the plots, a lot more development has been left to me. But don't expect any changes in style.

While there's more action in *Shockwave* than in *Revolution*, we are trying to maintain the same pacing and attitude. That's hopefully the title's signature now. Warren's version has been called *"the X-book for people who don't like X-books"*, and while I wouldn't go so far as to state that categorically, it will be easily distinguishable from all the others.

Of course, this wouldn't be possible if Ariel weren't producing terrific work. His art in *Shockwave* has so far been sensational. It's Warren's and my hope that we can keep the copy down by letting the art carry much of the burden of narration. That's something you can't depend on with many artists, but Ariel's wonderful at it.

Grant on Qabiri

I don't want to say too much about him yet. He'll have somewhat sharper, more severe features than in Ariel's designs. He's the villain-to-be I was speaking of.

Whereas the Broken Man of **X-Man** #63-66 was from a broken world at the bottom of the spiral, Qabiri – that's his given name but he'll have another name on Earth – is from the sublime worlds at the top of the spiral, the Brilliant City. From there, every other world is a broken world. They've become aware that beings from the lower worlds – the darknesses they call them – have learned to walk the spiral. Nate's not the only one, as we already know. He's not even the only one on Marvel-Earth. It's forbidden for citizens of the Brilliant City to have contact with the darknesses, since they don't want to be contaminated.

Qabiri, alone of all his people, gets pro-active on what he sees as an impending, civilization threatening problem. Now that lessers have discovered the spiral, it's only a matter of time before contamination comes to the Brilliant City instead.

So he sacrifices himself, to defend the City, to nip the problem in the bud before it can crest, and he's willing to do anything to save the city, even if it means wiping out all the broken worlds.

Extremism in defence of liberty is no vice, and all that. Like I said, he's the inverse of the Broken Man, a demon from heaven to the Broken Man's angel from hell. Nate's got his hands full!"

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Ennis and Ezquerra go to war

Bloody Mary co-creators reunite for Pythonesque-styled World War II farce mocking the spirit of The Dirty Dozen

GARTH Ennis is turning his iconoclastic attention to the Second World War for his next Vertigo project.

With both **Preacher** and **Hitman** heading towards their final issues, the writer is readying himself for fresh challenges. One such is a three-parter on which he is collaborating with Spanish artist Carlos Ezquerra, his **Bloody Mary** co-creator.

Speaking to **CI**, Ezquerra described **Adventures in the Rifle Brigade** as "a World War Two era comedy, a very broad farce of commando missions, evil Nazis, British stiff upper lip, Gestapo torture and fiendishly cunning plans in the face of adversity."

Adding that the series features lots of action and gangs, Ezquerra commented, "Imagine *The Dirty Dozen* or *Where Eagles Dare* if they had been done by the *Monty Python* team.

"Now try to imagine all those ingredients mixed by Garth," the Judge Dredd co-creator concluded.

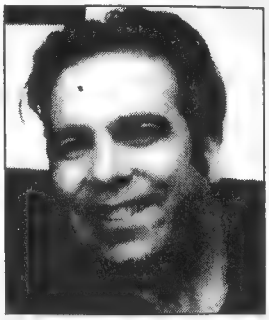
Preacher covers

Following **Preacher**'s final issue [#66], Vertigo is issuing **Preacher: Dead Or Alive**.

A collection of the series' covers – each accompanied by commentary from Ennis and cover artist Glenn Fabry – the book is similar to last year's **The Sandman: Dust Covers – The Collected Sandman Covers**.

Palmiotti quits Marvel Knights

JIMMY PALMIOTTI has resigned from the highly successful Marvel imprint he founded with his longtime Event Comics collaborator, penciller Joe Quesada.



*ABOVE: Jimmy Palmiotti who is to marry **Gatecrasher** penciller Amanda Conner.*

Announcing Palmiotti's surprising decision to leave Marvel Knights, Quesada explained that it was due to personal matters and the resulting need for the artist to lessen his workload.

Although he continues to ink Steve Dillon on Marvel Knights' recently launched **Punisher** series, Palmiotti also plans to give up inking **Daredevil**, on which he worked with Quesada.

There is as yet no word on Palmiotti's **Daredevil** replacement nor is it known how his decision will affect his other assignments which include **Gatecrasher: The Series**, the forthcoming title from **Wizard**'s Black Bull spin-off.

The ultimate crossover?

FOR A while it seemed Dark Horse's **Aliens vs Predator vs the Terminator** would stand as the ultimate crossover but that accolade is about to go to a Top Cow series that involves two of those three movie creatures.

Combining their writing talents with those of **Faust**'s David Quinn, **Witchblade**'s Paul Jenkins and Scott (**The Darkness**) Lobdell are developing the four-parter which also features the stars of their Top Cow titles.

In the cumbersomely but aptly titled **Aliens/Predator/Darkness/Witchblade**, the horror-based heroes face two races that are fast becoming the ubiquitous foes of inter-company crossovers.

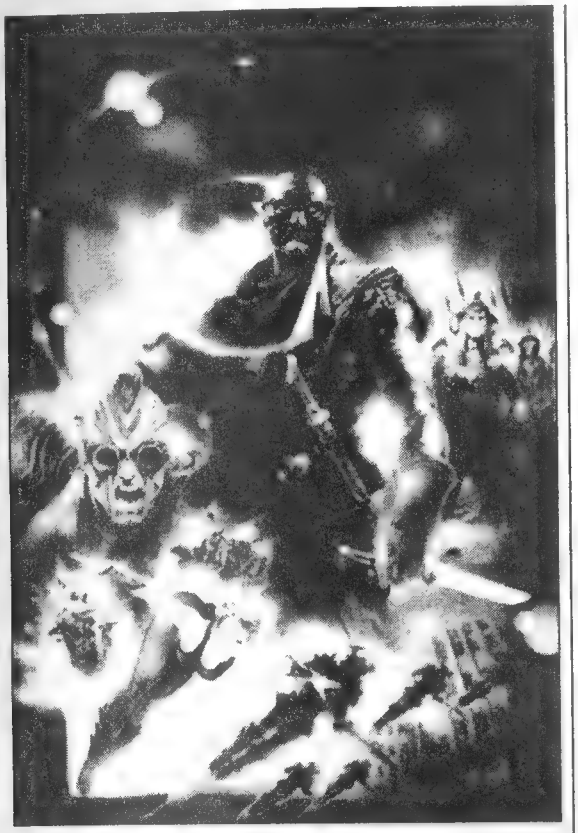
*ABOVE: Keu Cha and D-Tron's cover art for **Witchblade** #42.*

No further information is available on this project scheduled for an October launch. Even writer Jenkins told **CI** it was such early days that he was only just starting to formulate ideas.

The members of The Rifle Brigade

PICTURED is art from **Adventures in the Rifle Brigade** provided exclusively to **CI** by Carlos Ezquerra who also supplied descriptions of the various characters:
TOP ROW: Captain The Right Honourable Hugo "Khyber" Darcy –British upper class, the kind of chap who built the Empire; Sergeant Crumb – his speciality is wringing people's necks; Hank the Yank – explosives expert, specialising in being American.
BOTTOM ROW: Second Lieutenant Cecil "Doubtful" Milk – secretly in love with his commanding officer, but neither of them conscious of this fact; Corporal Geezer – a shrewd Cockney – very dangerous with a knife; The Piper – Scotsman, plays tunes at Darcy's command, old Highland reels like *The Blue Bollock* and *McAughtry's Arsepiece*.
ABOVE: An Ezquerra interior page from **Adventures in the Rifle Brigade**.

*JERRY Ordway's career is the subject of the fourth and final issue of Jeff Smith's **Secret Identity**. Retitled **The Ordster Chronicles: The Art of Jerry Ordway**, the 48-page Better Press 'zine covers the work of the writer/artist who – while possibly best-known for **The Power of Shazam!** – has also written and/or drawn numerous titles including **All-Star Squadron**, **Superman**, **Infinity Inc** and **Wildstar: Sky Zero**. Tentatively scheduled for late this year, the black and white title includes an exhaustive interview with Ordway covering his 20+ years in comics.*



Dixon puts Mad Max spin on Fantastic Four's nemesis

THE FANTASTIC Four's archenemy is finally to star in his own title.

Longtime Dr Doom fan Chuck Dixon is helming a three-parter that, he says, "Finds Doom, without weapons or armour – in fact, buck naked! – wandering the wastelands on the Celestial-created Doomworld".

Speaking to **CI**, he said the series concerns the real Doom – not a hologram or android or doppelganger – stranded on the planet a lot of Marvel characters visited thanks to the "Image Comics Travel Agency".

"He's cut off from the network of support he built while he was there," Dixon continued. "He's alone on the Serengeti in Africa. He's friendless – no stretch for Doom – and powerless in a world hostile to him."

Mad Max

"The emphasis is on action/adventure as Doom uses his wits and animal ruthlessness to get back to the Baxter Building on this alternate world," the **Marvel Knights** writer continued. "His challenge is to struggle back to control of Doomworld and get back to Earth.

Describing the series, the writer said that much of it was like Mel Gibson's Mad Max as if writen by Conan creator Robert E. Howard.

Leonardo Manco

"The art on the mini is by Leonardo Manco fresh off **Blaze of Glory**," added Dixon. "And the art is as gorgeous as you might think it is. This story moves from primordial survival to world conquest and Leonardo handles it all magnificently."

Manco's cover art for the first issue is shown above.

Dixon also said that the $2.99 **Doom** provides the backstory for events coming up in the Fantastic Four's regular title. According to Marvel, the August-launcing series also fills in the gap between events in **Fantastic Four** #25 and #30.

● Despite his importance to the Marvel Universe, this is only Victor von Doom's third starring role – if the futuristic **Doom 2099** in which he might or might not have featured – is excluded.

Introduced in 1962 in **Fantastic Four** #5, Doom first went solo in 1969 – cover-featured on **Marvel Super-Heroes** #20. A year later, he shared top-billing in **Astonishing Tales** #1-8 with Ka-Zar, who then took over the title.

Allred creates G-Men from Hell movie tie-in

AFTER an eight month break, Michael Allred's **Madman Comics** resurfaces at Dark Horse with a four-part serial.

The story arc begins on August 16 in the 24-page #17 and is, the writer/artist told **CI**, "the closest thing to an adaptation of the film." It is titled *The G-Men from Hell* as is the movie the **Madman** creator refers to.

A low-budget feature, the film is based on Allred's unfinished *Goulash* strip in **Grafik Muzik**. It is directed by Christopher (*Palmer's Pickup*) Coppola and has yet to find a distributor although post-production is virtually complete.

Among those featured in the movie are Gary (*Lethal Weapon*) Busey, *Kingpin*'s Vanessa Angel and William (*Raising Arizona*) Forsythe.

The film's opening title sequence features a series of comicbook pages by Allred which lead into the story of the movie.

Published by Maverick, Dark Horse's creator-owned imprint, **Madman Comics** #17 – solicited as **Madman Comics: The G-Men from Hell** #1 – is priced $2.95.

Image to launch Warren Ellis line

CONTROVERSIAL writer Warren Ellis is following the example set by Alan Moore and establishing his own line of comics.

However, unlike his fellow Brit whose America's Best Comics is a DC imprint, the mercurial **Planetary** scribe has taken his titles – which he once described as Pop Comics – to Image.

No crossovers

Announcing the arrangement in Bristol at Comics 2000, Image publisher Jim Valentino said, "We consider this a major leap forward in Image's progression toward more reader-friendly comics from top flight creators. We are honoured that a writer of Warren's stature has chosen to bring his complete vision to Image."

The as-yet untitled line of comics debuts this winter. It will consist of three issue mini-series and original graphic novels.

Regardless of format, each story will be completely self-contained with no crossover of characters or concepts. The material will be written solely by Ellis, while the artists on each project will be hand-picked and matched with a story that best displays their talents.

Michael Heisler – former WildStorm editor-in-chief – is serving as editor and consultant to the entire line which is being targeted at readers outside of the traditional comicbook buyers.

Ellis commented, "This is a slate of commercial full-colour comics series, with the sort of first-class wide screen production values associated with **Planetary**, **The Authority** and other such books, doing the sort of material I live for – accessible stories outside the mainstream, as mad and beautiful and smart as I can make them."

City of Silence

The writer added, "It's the space between **Planetary** and **Transmetropolitan** – a slate of work aimed as much at new readers outside comics culture as at the already-extant audience waiting for something new."

While no other details are yet available, both Ellis and Image indicated that readers can get a glimpse of the intended direction for the line from Ellis's **City of Silence** which premieres from Image on May 17th.

Drawn by Gary Erskine, the science fiction series focuses on three special investigators – known as Silencers – whose brief is to keep the more dangerously imaginative members of a future society quiet.

Speaking about the new line, Anthony Bozzi, Image's director of marketing, remarked, "It's been proven repeatedly that fans of sequential storytelling want fresh, new works outside of the traditional superhero genre. They just want it to be colourfully alive, dynamic, and of the highest quality. Warren will soon provide all of this and more on his biggest canvas to date."

ABOVE: Gary Erskine art from Image's three-issue ***City of Silence****.*

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JOB DONE!

Strange Tales: Marvel dusts off Code reject

MARVEL has commissioned John Ostrander to write a conclusion to an unfinished Warren Ellis mini-series despite having no plans for the three-parter's publication.

Ellis developed **Satana** in 1997 as one of a trio of titles intended for the then new *Strange Tales* line.

As Marvel's Bill Rosemann explained, "All three were created with the idea that Marvel wanted to produce projects for mature readers that were non-Code approved. However, after the first issues were completed, a new power structure came into being and said all of our books had to be Code approved. Luckily, both **Werewolf by Night** and **Man-Thing** were able to be tweaked to comply with Code guidelines.

"Ultimately," Rosemann added, "Everyone decided that **Satana** shouldn't be published as a Code approved book as it would betray the creative vision of the project. We then decided to sit on it until a time arrived when non-Code approved books would be welcomed."

Code rejection

Commenting on the latest development, the mercurial Ellis remarked, "Just for a laugh, [Ralph Macchio] the editor submitted **Satana** #1 – which was completed and ready to go to print – to the Comics Code. We all thought it would come back covered in notes, as it always did to Marie Javins when I did **Hellstorm** and **Druid**," he added.

"This time, there were no scribbles, just a letter which read, and I paraphrase: We cannot suggest any changes that would make this suitable for humans, other than that it be completely rewritten and redrawn," he continued.

"I'm kind of proud of that," the **Planetary** writer quipped.

Regarding the basic story ideas, Ellis explained that once he had excised all the Marvel references they became the premise of his 1999 Avatar Press series, **Strange Kiss**. He added that Macchio had approached him to complete the story but that he had declined.

Ellis on Ostrander

Commenting on Marvel's choice of John Ostrander to complete his story, Ellis said, "I'm looking forward to seeing what he does, actually. Weird situation but John is a very inventive writer whom I don't think has been terribly well-served by the venues for his writing of late."

Ostrander, speaking to **CI**, said he accepted the assignment because he thinks it will be an interesting challenge. "My goal is to bring the story to a close in a way that makes sense to the reader," he explained. "We'll see how successful I am further down the line."

Stifling speculation that Marvel is about to launch a new non-Code line, Bill Rosemann told **CI**, "As of this writing, plans for any kind of mature readers line simply don't exist. While the series is being finished, **Satana** is not scheduled, so I can't say if or when it will ever be printed."

Bendis creates second Spawn spin-off

SAM & Twitch writer Brian Michael Bendis is adding a second spin-off from Todd McFarlane's best-selling **Spawn** to his portfolio.

Drawn by **Spawn: Blood and Salvation**'s Ashley Wood, **Hellspawn** replaces **Spawn the Undead** on the Image schedule.

According to Image, the $2.50 series – which debuts in August – brings out the twisted side of modern urban horror. It kicks off a serial that brings back the Clown, the earthly guise of the Violator, the shape-shifting demon who first appeared in **Spawn** #2 [1992].

● The regular **Spawn** title is getting a new artist. Starting with the August-shipping #101, Angel Medina is replacing Greg Capullo.

Medina, who teams up with series inker Danny Miki, previously pencilled the first eight issues of **Sam & Twitch**, the other **Spawn** spin-off written by Brian Michael Bendis.

*ABOVE: Ashley Wood's cover art for **Hellspawn** #1.*

Batman's fifth Golden Age artist dies

DICK Sprang died on May 10 in Prescott, Arizona after having been ill for several months. He was 84.

Best-known for his boldly stylised Batman art in the '40s and '50s, Sprang was born in Fremont, Ohio in 1915. Without any formal art training, he cited *Flash Gordon*'s Alex Raymond, *Prince Valiant*'s Hal Foster and Milton (*Terry and the Pirates*) Caniff among his influences which also included Howard Pyle, Rockwell, Kent and other illustrators.

BY THE TIME THE DENSE SMOKE CLEARS...
THE RIDDLER WILL GET AWAY – AND I CAN'T FOLLOW HIM, KNOWING LAGLE WILL SUFFOCATE INSIDE THAT PUZZLE!
NOW BATMAN MATCHES HIS WITS AGAINST A HIGHLY COMPLEX PUZZLE, WITH A LIFE AT STAKE IF HE FAILS!
I'LL NEVER BE ON THE SCENE OF THIS IN TIME TO SAVE HIM!
WAIT! THE LITTLE NICKS ON SOME OF THESE STEEL RODS WERE OBVIOUSLY MADE WHEN THE RODS SCRAPED AGAINST EACH OTHER!
BY CAREFULLY FOLLOWING THE TINY NICKS SHOWING HOW THE RODS WERE FITTED TOGETHER, BATMAN UNDOES THE PUZZLE!
JUST IN TIME, ROBIN!
UHHH!
AFTERWARDS... IT IS A GRIM BATMAN WHO REJOINS ROBIN!
THE RIDDLER'S STAGING A CRIME CHARADE IN THIS TOWN THAT WE'VE GOT TO STOP! THAT MAN'S DANGEROUS!
MEANWHILE...
THAT WILL DO NICELY FOR MY FINAL CHALLENGE TO BATMAN AND ROBIN – A RIDDLE TO END ME OR THEM – NOW, GOOD!

*ABOVE: From **Detective Comics** #140 [1948], a Dick Sprang and Charles Paris page from the story that introduced the Riddler.*

He began his professional career at 15, painting signs, billboards, street banners, and the like. Hired by the **Toledo News Bee** in 1934 to work on advertising art, layout, composition and editorial cartoons, Sprang moved to New York City two years later where he began illustrating stories for pulp magazines, most notably westerns. He wrote almost 30 western pulp stories as well as providing art for **The Shadow** and other detective and adventure pulps.

In 1941, DC's Whitney Ellsworth gave him three pages of a Batman script to draw. Upon seeing the result Ellsworth immediately assigned the artist to a 13 page Batman tale, making Sprang only the fifth artist to draw the character.

During his career Sprang mainly drew Batman stories and covers for **Batman**, **Detective** and **World's Finest** but he also worked on **Superman**, **Lois Lane** and **Jimmy Olsen**.

Other than the occasional cover artwork, he stopped drawing comics fulltime in the early 1960s although his most recent work was in the 1999 Aragones spoof **Fanboy** #2. Sprang is survived by his wife, Mario

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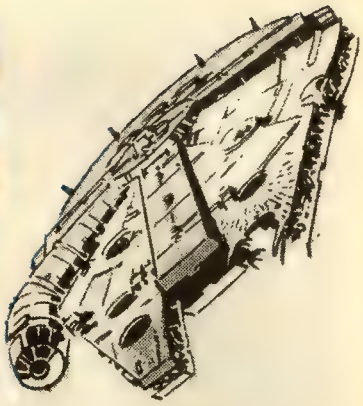

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Toy News

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Movie merchandise mania

THOSE comics fans who have waited with trembling knees for the *X-Men* movie to hit British screens can now start keying themselves up for the new *Spider-Man* movie, due for a US release in Autumn 2001.

A wee bit premature? Well, maybe. But try telling that to the bods at Sony who – despite not having exposed a single frame of film – have already begun bargaining for the merchandising rights.

ABOVE: Mr Der-Man – "Hmm, my Spider cents are tingling!"

At an invitation-only meeting at UCLA in California, the formation of Spider-Man Merchandising was announced to hundreds of companies interested in acquiring licensing rights for Spidey products to appear timed to the movie laucnh hype.

Naturally, *Spider-Man* is expected to be a big earner and extremely lucrative in the toy market.

Elsewhere in the film/toy world, Steven Spielberg has been taken to court over his film *Small Soldiers*.

Alan Grant (not the comics author) claims to have met with Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment to discuss making a full-length version of his short *G.I. Joe*. He was allegedly told that they were not interested in making a movie about toy dolls. Two weeks later, Amblin announced *Small Soldiers*, an animated movie about toy soldiers coming to life.

Mr. Grant is seeking unspecified damages.

Cartoon Books toy deal

YET another outlet for action figures has been announced from the team at Cartoon Books.

In order to promote its planned new line of toys, the publishing company has decided that distributing its own figures is preferable to licensing them out to external companies.

Jeff Smith, creator of Cartoon Books, recently outlined the initial proposals for toys due to be released in the autumn of this year.

Figures from popular series **Bone** will feature prominently, with Phoney Bone, Gran'ma Ben and the Hooded One leading the way, and other figures such as the Red Dragon and Kingdok already in the planning stages for release in 2001.

The initial action figure line was licensed to ReSaurus and was enormously popular with fans and retailers, selling out thousands of cases within weeks of the launch.

The new figures are being designed to correspond with the existing ReSaurus figures. Grandma Ben, for example, will retail with the Mystery Cow Suit accessory which the original Smiley Bone can fit into.

Cartoon Books's Steve Hamaker said, "We expect to have the first prototypes ready for their debut this summer."

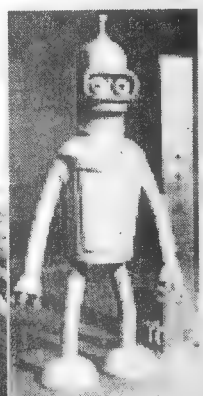
"The toys that we have planned look awesome," said Smith. "I can't wait to tear them out of their blister packs!"

*ABOVE: **Bone** has been translated into 13 different languages, and sold out thousands of cases of action figures.*

It's time for Mike Myers to take a triple bow for his multiple appearances in Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me. *He is to get three action figures in his varying likenesses. In July McFarlane Toys will release 9" figures of Austin Powers, Dr. Evil and Fat Bastard [above] each with signature sound phrases activated by a pull-string.*

Moore figures announced

MOORE Action Collectibles is celebrating this month after having secured the rights for the design, production and sales of action figures based on characters from Matt Groening's latest cartoon series *Futurama*.



The rights, awarded by Fox Television, were highly prized in the retail industry after the success of Groening's line of Genuine Simpsons Crud.

The new series of collectables will feature the TV show's three leading characters: Fry, Leela and the latest in a distinguished line of paranoid androids, Bender *[right]*.

Elsewhere on the Moore roster is a new line of porcelain collectables, including a bust of Top Cow's Witchblade-wielding Sara Pezzini.

The bust *[right]* has been sculpted by Clayburn Moore, and is a fully-painted seven inches tall.

It joins a series of award-winning Witchblade sculpture from Moore, and is limited to an edition of 5000 pieces, retailing at $59.95 each.

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Mike Conroy's FRAME TO FRAME

The comics medium has had a strong interaction with film and TV for as long as each has existed, inspired by licence or plagiarism. Mike Conroy looks at the latest events.

Marvel lines up Ghost Rider and other second stringers for multimedia assault

With X-Men *and* Spider-Man *features in the pipeline, America's number one comicbook publisher develops plans for more multimedia projects*

GIVEN the success of *Blade*, it's hardly surprising that Marvel is bringing in its writer – David Goyer – to work his magic on another of its supernatural heroes.

The screenwriter – currently working on a sequel to the Wesley Snipes movie – is also scripting *Ghost Rider* starring Marvel's demonic motorcyclist.

Set to begin filming early next year, the movie is a joint production between Marvel and Crystal Sky Entertainment – producers of Sony/TriStar's *Baby Geniuses*. This potential blockbuster is expected to have a budget in excess of $75 million. It is being produced by Avi Arad – president and CEO of Marvel Studios, Crystal Sky's president and CEO Steve Paul and actor Jon Voight who won an Academy Award for Best Actor for his role as a paraplegic in 1978's *Coming Home*.

The Oscar winner may also give himself a part in *Ghost Rider*.

Johnny Depp

While the announcement fails to name which of Marvel's two motorcycling Ghost Riders is being featured in the movie, the background story suits the first version – Johnny Blaze.

Apparently another Johnny, Depp, is being targeted to play the title role. If this is the case, let's hope *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* star turns in a better performance than in his recently slated *Astronaut's Wife*. However, Depp is known for his more egocentic roles *(Ed Wood, Benny and June, Edward Scissorhands)*. So let's hope he gets into this one.

Incidentally, there's a fascinating reference in the press release to Ghost Rider as "one of Marvel's most successful and edgy comic book characters".

On current trends, it looks like the producers have been sold a turkey. But when you consider that the combined number of Ghost Rider-driven comics totals around 240, there's only a handful of other Marvel stars to match it.

ABOVE: Ghost Rider, who first appeared in Marvel Spotlight #5 [1972; art by Mike Ploog]. Seeking revenge for harm done to his one true love, Johnny Blaze makes a pact with dark forces. By day he is a motorcycle stuntman able to perform superhuman tricks. At night he is transformed into a demonic spirit of vengeance with a burning skull for a face, who hunts down those who bring pain to the innocent.

A job lot of Marvels

In a separate deal, Marvel has entered into a joint venture with Artisan Entertainment – of *The Blair Witch Project* fame.

The comprehensive arrangement brings the two parties together to develop, produce and distribute programming for film, television, video and the Internet based on 15 mutually agreed Marvel properties.

The worldwide agreement – described as the most far-reaching one Marvel has ever entered into with any of the Hollywood studios – includes such second-stringers as Morbius, Deadpool, Black Panther, Iron Fist, Longshot, Power Pack and Ant-Man as well as a couple of A-list characters: Thor and – getting his fourth stab at cinematic success – Captain America.

The deal also allows Marvel to retain licensing and merchandising programmes for all the productions.

Internet, films and video

As part of the combined venture, feature films will be developed for theatrical distribution as well as

ABOVE: Bob Hall and Tom Morgan art from Marvel's adaptation of the 1990 Captain America movie which starred Matt Salinger as the Sentinel of Liberty.

direct-to-video release (presumably for the duffers), while home viewing will consist of TV series and one-off movies. The Internet initiatives will appear as short films and videos.

Revenue generated from both the distribution of the productions and the licensing and merchandising is to be shared equally by Marvel and Artisan with both owning equal shares in the programming library.

Fortunes made and lost

But it all leaves me slightly cold. I'm not basing my cynicism on Marvel's seemingly patented ability to shoot itself in the foot at every opportunity but rather on the entire project's chances of success.

Let's face it, has anyone to date made a financial success out of an Internet endeavour? Sure, there have been fortunes made (and lost) in share dealing in e-based enterprises but no-one – other than maybe a handful of porn merchants – has yet managed to turn a serious profit from any form of e-commerce or entertainment. And that's despite the millions – if not billions – being invested or, depending on your outlook, thrown into the cyber-equivalent of a black hole.

I'm sure the day will come when the 'Net will pay big dividends to some but that day's not here yet.

On the movie and TV side, this wholesaling of Marvel movies is

ABOVE: Ant-Man by John Byrne and Terry Austin [1980].

ABOVE: Morbius by Ron Wagner and Mike Witherby [1992].

typical given the company's reputation for quick sales against quality control. Witness DC's smarter path with fewer releases but more blockbusters.

Overzealous saturation?

Leaving aside Thor and Captain America, if Deadpool, Iron Fist and the rest are the characters to which they mutually agreed, which ones did they turn down?

Even if the rights to the likes of Daredevil, The Hulk, Silver Surfer and the Fantastic Four weren't available, were these really the best of what was left?

Let's face it, not one of these characters has been able to support his own title for any length of time. Even Deadpool's comic has often been rescued from cancellation.

And as for Captain America... He was the first Marvel hero to make it to the movies – in a 1944 Republic Pictures serial. But his later outings, two 1979 duff TV movies and a dreadful 1990 feature film starring Matt Sallinger, are good examples of why adaptations of Marvel characters for live action films generally suck.

Fingers crossed for *The X-Men*.

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Phil Hall's HOTSHOTS

Ex-retailer and long-time CI staffer Phil picks the most interesting upcoming titles from our Advance Listings section. A good read? A potential sales hit? Or even a mixture of both? The number of smiley faces denotes how good he thinks it will be and the dollar signs signify how well he thinks it will sell.

☺☺☺$$ **Rising Stars #9** *Top Cow/Image; Straczynski & Zanier*
The beginning of the second story arc of a comic series that has lived up to all the hyperbole and critical acclaim it has received. With talk of TV deals for this series and the birth of Joe's Comics (the new imprint for J Michael Straczynski's ideas), this title continues to go from strength to strength and while the 'real life' or 'dark and gritty' approaches have been done before, few have had this much class!

☺☺$$ **The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen #6** *DC/ABC; Moore & O'Neill*
There are few comics which garner more praise than this at present. Despite a growing lateness (#5 was eight months late and was then pulped and reprinted) sales continue to rise and I expect this final, revelation-filled issue to be full of surprises. Personally, I don't really like Kevin O'Neill's art style and I've found the story to be almost clever for clever's sake, but it's been an enjoyable ride nonetheless.

☺☺$$ **Sentry #1 (of 5)** *Marvel; Jenkins & Lee*
The eagerly-awaited Paul Jenkins and Jae Lee follow up to **Inhumans**. The hype surrounding this book has failed to make much of the fact it has a completely bogus back-history. But hasn't the 'hero disappears saving the world and everybody forgets about him' story already been done in issues of **Justice League Task Force**? Providing this doesn't get bogged down in explanation, I expect it to be very smooth.

☺☺$ **Superman: Last Son of Earth** *DC; Gerber & Wheatley*
Elseworlds stories tend to be hit or miss affairs, but this looks worth the price of admission because Doug Wheatley's pencilled art is quite stunning and you can normally guarantee that Steve Gerber will turn in a witty and pathos-filled story. I'm surprised no one ever thought of this before (or have they?) – a boy sent from a dying Earth to Krypton, who grows up as a cripple among supermen!

☺$$$ **Universe X #0** *Marvel; Ross + Krueger & Braithwaite*
Earth X ended up as a wordy, quite boring, run-of-the-mill **What If...?** type story that was eight issues too long. Has this got what it takes to rise above its predecessor? I'm just not sure. Dougie Braithwaite will turn in an exemplary job, but is Bill Reinhold the right inker? I'd rather see Alex Ross contributing more than a plot and a few teasing character sketches. Should sell bucketsful, but only to those with short memories.

☺$ **Avatars #1 (of 3)** *Marvel; Kaminski & Jimenez + Alpuente*
I'm also not too sure about this. Oscar Jimenez is a top quality artist (as he's shown on **JLA** and **Contest of Champions II**) and that should be enough to ensure a standard of excellence in presentation, it's just the idea seems so... cobbled together! Len Kaminski isn't a major player and this is hardly likely to transport him there. A curio.

☺$ **Iron Man: Bad Blood #1 (of 4)** *Marvel; Michelinie & Layton*
I'm only really interested in this because I enjoyed the creative partnership's long run on **Iron Man** during the Eighties and early Nineties. So many artists and writers have returned to titles they made their reputations on in recent months this has almost been overlooked. Probably won't appeal to much of ol' Shellhead's current crop of readers, but crumblies and neo-crumblies will relish the nostalgia!

☺$ **Vampi #1** *Harris; Conway & Lau*
This won't work, but credit to David Conway and Kevin Lau for attempting to re-invent the impossible. Oh, yes, Vampi is Vampirella with a new look and attitude to match by the way. I give it six months, then back to the old.

$$ **Wolverine #154** *Marvel; Liefeld*
Will they ever learn? Is this some kind of horrid joke? Has no one at Marvel noticed that Rob Liefeld solicits more comics than most of DC, Dark Horse and Image put together every month? And then systematically fails to deliver. Do they have no memories of Rob's **Cable** return/debacle? Or his **Captain America**? I've fallen into an alternate reality, haven't I?

☺ **Archie #500** *Archie; DeCesare & Goldberg*
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The following are 32 page colour titles unless stated

ON SALE WEEK ENDING

JULY 1

Dark Horse

Alien vs Predator vs The Terminator 3 (of 4; Mark Schultz & Mel Ruby + Christopher Fry) The deadly Terminator/Alien hybrids are getting closer to Los Alamos 235 and to the ability to reproduce themselves. $2.95

Blade of the Immortal 46 *(The Gathering* 4 of 15; Hiroaki Samura) Hyakurin has a present for Manji. Because of a letter forged by her men, Itto-ryu is going to send a swordsman to Anotsu in Kaga. If Manji is tough enough he can kill the man, take his travel papers, and go after Rin. Mature. b&w .. $2.96

Buffy the Vampire Slayer 22 (Christopher Golden & various) Once more, Sunnydale is playing host to a congregation of the undead, and it's up to Buffy and her gang to find out why and put a stop to it. Variant cover. $2.95

Digimon 2 (various) Tai and his friends find themselves trapped in Digiworld, but they have made friends with some digital monsters. But the Digimon are not merely cute little monsters. They have a sting in their digital tails. $2.95

Ghost 21 (Mike Kennedy & Ryan Benjamin) Malcolm Greymater has always worked behind the scenes, consolidating his empire, plotting his enemies' destruction, and letting his minions handle the dirty work. But now Ghost has interfered with his plans and thwarted his schemes too often. It is time to destroy Elisa Cameron. $2.95

Joker/Mask 2 (of 4; Henry Gilroy & Ramon Bachs) The Joker/Mask, is becoming a TV superstar while wreaking havoc all over Gotham City. To make matters even worse, Batman is nowhere to be found. Co-published with DC Comics. $2.95

Star Wars 19 (Twilight 1 of 4; John Ostrander & Jan Duursema + Rick Magyar) Jedi Knight Quinlan Vos has lost his memory, and the Devaronian Villie, is playing him for a bet. Deadly swoops, false Jedi, and a gambler are all trying to kill Quin – can he survive without knowing he is a Jedi? .. $2.95

Star Wars Tales 4 (Kevin Rubio & Lovern Kindzierski + Killian Plunkett) Rubio, creator of the short film *Troops* (based around an unstated part of the original Star Wars) lends a hand in this quarter's Tales. Plus a follow-up on the acclaimed adventures of Jabba the Hutt's nefarious swoop thugs, Big Gizz and Spiker. 64pg $4.95

Super Manga Blast! 4 (various) Keiichi's friend Otaki is in love. Unfortunately the guy's an idiot. Can Belldandy's goddess power help him? Plus, more sci-fi suspense in *Seraphic Feather* and a story from *3x3 Eyes* Mature readers. 128pg b&w $4.95

Xena: Warrior Princess 10 (Ian Edgington & Mike Deodato) What do you do with a wayward Viking who spurns the usual pillaging for reading and music? Well, you send an army of mercenaries after him and have a warrior princess show him what it means to fight. Variant cover. .. $2.95

DC Comics

NEW **Accelerate** 1 (Richard Kennedy & The Pander Brothers; *Vertigo) See Close-Up, below.*

Action Comics 768 (Joe Kelly & Duncan Rouleau + Mario Alquiza) The Marvel family guest-stars as Mary and Freddy ask for Superman's help in rescuing the original Captain Marvel, but Superman will pay dearly in the attempt. $2.25

The Authority 16 (Mark Millar & Frank Quitely + Trevor Scott; *WildStorm)* A superhuman arms race between the Americans and the Soviets raged in secret for almost 40 years, with vast hangars filled with deranged, obedient overmen protecting every major city in the world. Has the past come back to haunt us? $2.50

Batman 580 (Larry Hama & Scott McDaniel) Orca's heart is in the right place, but will her brazen actions force Batman to side with evil heiress Camille Baden-Smythe? $2.25

Batman Beyond 10 (Hilary J. Bader & Craig Rousseau + Rob Leigh) Batman races against time to put an end to the menace of the Golem robot with the relationship between a father and son hanging in the balance. $1.99

Batman: It's Joker Time 2 (of 3; Bob Hall) As the Joker enthrals a studio audience and the viewers with a tale of love, betrayal, treachery and reincarnation, Batman tries to find out where the broadcast is coming from. 48pg Prestige. $4.95

Catwoman 83 (Bronwyn Carlton & Staz Johnson + Wayne Faucher) The siege at the women's prison is about to boil over into a full-scale riot. With the fleeing feline nowhere to be found, Batman and Commissioner Gordon follow a deadly trail of clues. ... $2.25

Countdown 3 (of 12; Jeff Mariotte & Aaron Lopresti + Randy Emberlin; *WildStorm)* Tap explores the possibilities of being overwhelmingly persuasive with the merest thought. Meanwhile USAF Captain Ben Randall tries to track down the bits of space debris that fell to Earth, leading to some startling discoveries. $2.50

Crimson 19 (Brian Augustyn & Humberto Ramos + Sandra Hope) The dragons are in New York and they're bent on regaining their position as the only inhabitants of Earth by eliminating all of humankind. $2.50

Dexter's Laboratory 12 (Bill Wray + John Rozum & various) For years Dexter has dumped failed experiments down the kitchen sink, but now they have come back to haunt him. . $1.99

The Flash 163 (Pat McGreal & Ron Lim + Doug Hazlewood) A mysterious villain from Linda's past threatens both her and Wally – as well as four members of the JLA! Is there any way Flash can rescue everyone in the space of a single heartbeat? $2.25

Hellblazer 151 *(Good Intentions* 1 of 6; Brian Azzarello & Marcelo Frusin; *Vertigo)* As John Constantine sets out to uncover the true nature of the forces that have conspired against him, he experiences a different kind of danger. Mature readers. $2.50

Hitman 52 (Garth Ennis & Joe McCrea + Garry Leach) The Many-Angled Ones, tyrants from among the gaps of Hell, have only one desire: an Earth of screaming dead with a billion souls to swallow. Six-Pack and Section Eight take on the bad guys in the climax to this tale, with an ending that will shock Tommy and Natt. $2.50

JLA 44 (Mark Waid & Howard Porter + Drew Geraci) Gripped by a mysterious illness that has destroyed all communication on Earth, the world enters an even greater state of panic as speech begins to fade into unintelligible gibberish. $2.25

Justice League of America Archives Vol VI (Gardner Fox & various; hbk) Reprints Justice League of America #41-50, except issue #48, which was itself a reprint edition. These tales contain the first appearance of some of the League's more enduring foes. 240pg $49.95

Kingdom Come 1 – Millennium Edition (Mark Waid & Alex Ross) Millennium Edition reprint, although there are plans afoot to bring out the later issues of the mini-series. Superman must confront the violent world of super-beings spawned since his retirement. Prestige. 48pg . $5.95

Lazarus Five 2 (of 5; various) Dark suspicions and even darker truths come to light as the shadowy past of Hank the Swede reveals its secrets. Hank's knowledge of the Decayed Ones shows how the creatures' deadly Ruling Class may finally succeed in taking the Earth for its own. $2.50

Mostly Wanted 2 (of 4; Scott Lobdell & Roberto Flores + Mark Irwin; *WildStorm)* Functionary soldier Andi Mooncrest and space nun Sister Crenn have a problem – they have suddenly become the Galaxy's most wanted criminals, even though they have committed no crime. $2.50

The Patriots 8 (Brandon Choi + Jonathan Peterson & Michael Ryan + Randy Elliott; *WildStorm)* Tower Bridge becomes a raging battlefield in the showdown between the Patriots and the radioactive Stealthers. It is now up to Zach Donovan and Rocky Boorman to use all the hi-tech firepower that International Operations can muster to stop the villainous leader Larsen. $2.50

ONE-SHOT **Robin: Flying Solo** (Chuck Dixon & various; tpbk) Reprinting Robin #1-6 and Showcase '94 #5-6. Tim Drake has been barred from the Batcave after a falling-out with the Dark Knight, so he has to go it alone, and a new independent side surfaces in the character of Robin. 176pg 7" x 10" $12.95

Steampunk 5 (Joe Kelly & Chris Bachalo + Richard Friend; *WildStorm)* Cole Blaquesmith finally embraces his responsibility to destroy Absinthe and leads the Underdwellers in a bloody revolt. $2.50

Supergirl 47 (Peter David & Leonard Kirk + Robin Riggs) In pursuit of the Carnivore, Supergirl goes up against virtually everyone she has ever fought. Even if Linda Danvers can withstand the assault on her mind and body, she will not be in any shape to handle the news she is about to hear. $2.25

Superman Annual 8 (various) Superman needs the help of three new superheroes in order to save Mexico from a mystical threat. Will Acrata, El Muerto and Iman be enough to turn the tide against the mystic energies of the world? 48pg $3.50

Superman & Bugs Bunny 2 (of 4; Mark Evanier & various) All the Looney Tunes are straying into the DC Universe thanks to the Do-Do and Mxyzptlk, and only Superman can keep the worlds apart. But how can he do it with the powers of Elmer Fudd? $2.50

Wonder Woman 159 (Eric Luke & Matthew Clark + Tom Simmons) Many plot threads developed over the last few months are resolved here as the WonderDome is brought to Earth as an embassy of peace. $2.25

DC CLOSE-UP

Accelerate 1

DC Comics

Writer: Richard Kennedy
Artists: The Pander Brothers

What is life like when you were never supposed to be born but society lets you live anyway, registered a loser while still in the womb? Miserablist title tracking the lives of misfits. ... $2.95

ON SALE JULY 1

Marvel

Avengers 31 (Kurt Busiek & George Pérez + Al Vey) How has the synthezoid's time away from the Earth's Mightiest Heroes changed him? And when the Grim Reaper declares war on Madame Masque, which side will the Avengers take? $2.25

Before The Four: Ben Grimm & Logan 2 (of 3; Larry Hama & Kaare Andrews + Walden Wong) Logan, Ben Grimm and Carol Danvers are trapped behind enemy lines. Shot down and captured by a Soviet strike force, they must find a way to escape that doesn't involve killing each other. $2.99

Daredevil 15 (David Mack & Joe Quesada + Kevin Mowlan) Follow the rags-to-riches story of Wilson Fisk from his humble beginnings, to his becoming an obsessed businessman, and then the Kingpin of Crime. $2.99

Deadpool 43 (Christopher Priest & Jim Calafiore + Jon Holdredge) After the events of Deadpool #41, Wade Wilson is stranded in space. He must find his way back to Earth or risk being killed by the interstellar space warden named Rasputin. $2.25

Gambit 19 *(Assassination Game* 3 of 4; Fabian Nicieza & Yanick Paquette + Sean Parsons) Remy LeBeau and Belladonna explore the pains of their past and the hopes of their future. But what does the New Son have in mind for the mutant called Quiet Bill? $2.25

Marvel Knights 2 (Chuck Dixon & Eduardo Barreto) The ultimate non-team attempts to fight its way out of one of the most disgusting, disease-ridden place known in the Marvel Universe – he New-York City subway system. Variant cover. $2.99

Marvel: The Lost Generation 7 (of 12; Roger Stern & John Byrne + Al Milgrom) For a decade, the First Line was the U.S.'s foremost superteam But then they ran up against a menace they could not stop, and it came from their own government. $2.99

Wolverine 153 (Steve Skroce) It is mayhem in the Far East, as Wolverine

faces a desperately murderous Lord Haan in a final showdown. But if Logan defeats Haan it looks like he might just trade in one evil for another. $2.25

X-Force 105 *(Games Without Frontiers* 4 of 4; Warren Ellis + Ian Edginton & Whilce Portacio) San Francisco is now ground zero for an anti-mutant wargame hatched 40 years ago. The only people with a prayer of stopping it without massive loss of life are X-Force. $2.25

ONE-SHOT **X-Men: Beginnings** (various; tpbk) Collected edition of all three official prequels on offer last month, tracing the development of Magneto, Rogue and Wolverine. 144pg ... $14.95

X-Men Universe 9 (various) Three X-Men stories in one book with character biographies and introductions. This month: Uncanny X-Men #380, Gambit #16 and Cable #79 ..... $4.99

ON SALE WEEK ENDING

JULY 8

Dark Horse

Dark Horse Presents 155 (various) In *Angel*, Cordelia's first starring role turns out to be the lead in the *Blair Witch* of snuff films, and Angel has to save her from competing forest spirits and demon movie producers. b&w . $2.95

The Nevermen 3 (of 4; Philip Amara & Guy Davis) Diggs, the missing Neverman, has been located, but mysteriously refuses to help his fellow Nevermen stop the insane plan of Clockwork. $2.95

Oh My Goddess! Part IX #1 *(Pretty in Scarlet;* Kosuke Fujishima) Skuld has been longing for a guardian angel just like Belldandy's. So when she discovers an Angel Egg in Urd's room, she can't keep her hands off it. But when she accidentally swallows the egg and the angel hatches inside her, she discovers that there is more to this than she thought. 40pg b&w $3.50

Titan A.E. 3 (of 3; Scott Allie & Al Rio + Randy Emberlin) The battle between King and Quen Drej has been settled, and Earth stands to be conquered as a result. Now it's up to a small band of humans to sneak on to the Drej mothership and prevent the invasion forces from being launched. $2.95

DC Comics

100 Bullets 14 (Brian Azzarello & Eduardo Risso; *Vertigo)* Dizzy learns just how much deep water she is in as Mr Branch tells her about the mysterious organisation called The Trust. Not only that but she finds out about Agent Graves's role within it – as well as her own. Mature. $2.50

Batgirl 6 (Kelley Puckett + Scott Peterson & Damion Scott + Robert Campanella) Batgirl gains more capacity for speech, but what she chooses to say may cost her dearly. $2.50

Batman: Gotham Adventures 28 (Scott Peterson & Tim Levins + Terry Beatty) A popular musician is kidnapped by the Riddler, who proceeds to leave baffling riddles for Batman, Robin and Nightwing. $1.99

Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight 133 *(Siege* 2 of 5; Archie Goodwin + James Robinson & Marshall Rogers + Bob Wiacek) As Colonel Brass plans his mercenary convention, Silver St Cloud's enquiries into his true motives grow to the point where even Batman cannot save her from the madman's plans. $2.25

Comics CLOSE-UP

Hellcat 1

Marvel Comics

Writer: Steve Engelheart
Artist: Norm Breyfogle

Since her first appearance in 1944 Patsy Walker (Hellcat) has been many things – teen idol, superhero, satanic bride. now she is back, and wants a quiet life. But she has become the prize in a hellish competition, and some loud life is about to begin. $2.99

ON SALE JULY 8

NEW **Batman: Outlaws** 1 (Doug Moench & Paul Gulacy + Charles Yoakum) In Gotham City, Batman has always been able to count on the cooperation of the local law enforcement team under the control of James Gordon. But what happens when Gordon is outranked by someone who has a grudge against any of the caped individuals in Gotham? . $4.95

Disavowed 6 (of 6; Michael Heisler & John Lucas; *Homage)* The final issue of this mini-series brings about the death of one of the Disavowed. But all is not as it seems when that member happens to be one of the world's most notorious magicians. Mature. . $2.50

ONE-SHOT **The Flash: Dead Heat** (Mark Waid & various; tpbk) Reprinting The Flash (second series) #108-111 and Impulse #10-11. Wally West leads the greatest speedsters against the menace of Savitar. 144pg 7" x 10" $14.95

Green Lantern 128 (Jay Faerber & Gus Vasquez + Andy Smith) Green Lantern and Arsenal are hanging out together when they each get emergency calls to handle the same situation. Panic ensues as both heroes are taken hostage and are separated from their trademark weapons. $2.25

Legion Lost 5 (Dan Abnett + Andy Lanning & Olivier Coipel + Lanning) The lost Legionnaires look to Shikari's pathfinding abilities to help lead them home. But the ride promises to be a bumpy one, especially when a small team led by Brainiac 5.1 comes across a drifting vessel housing an unstoppable creature that stands ready to destroy anything in its path. $2.50

Looney Tunes 68 (various) Daffy wants to be a Shakespearian superstar, but blows it all to bits as MacDuck. Sylvester gets a gold medal for chasing Tweety while Bugs tries to bug Elmer but makes history instead. $1.99

Lucifer 4 (Mike Carey & Dean Ormston + Warren Pleece; *Vertigo)* Elaine Belloc is a typical English schoolgirl, except that she can conjure, speak to the dead and see both the past and the future. When her best friend Mona is murdered, Elaine and Mona's ghost try to find out why. $2.50

ONE-SHOT **MAD Bathroom Companion** (The Usual Gang of Idiots; tpbk) Featuring some of the best short pieces from decades of MAD plus a new introduction by South Park impresario Trey Parker. 288pg b&w $9.95

MAD Magazine (The Usual Gang of Idiots) Celebrating the anniversary of American Independence. But was the right to publish the likes of MAD Magazine what they fought for all those years ago? 48pg b&w $2.99

Martian Manhunter 22 (John Ostrander & Tom Mandrake) A man has died in Gotham City. The Martian Manhunter investigates the deadly trail and it leads straight to billionaire Bruce Wayne. $2.50

Preacher 65 (Garth Ennis & Steve Dillon; *Vertigo)* The High-Noon of High-Noons is presented in this extra-length conclusion to the *Alamo* story-arc. Will it prove to be Jesse Custer's last stand? Mature readers. 48pg $3.75

Starman 69 (James Robinson & Peter Snejbjerg + Paul Smith) As the heroes of Opal City plan their counter-attack against Culp, the new Spider has his first confrontation with the Shade. $2.50

Star Trek: Deep Space Nine – N-Vector 2 (of 4; K.W. Jeter & Toby Cypress + Jason Martin; *WildStorm)* Deep Space Nine has been the victim of sabotage, and the prime suspect is the last person in the world anyone would suspect. $2.50

Superman 160 *(Superman: Arkham* 1 of 4; Jeph Loeb & Ed McGuinness + Cam Smith) Able to bend steel with his bare hands, leap tall buildings in a single bound, it's the black-clad, most wanted criminal to escape Arkham Asylum: Superman. $2.25

NEW **The Titans Annual** 1 (Geoff Johns + Ben Raab & various) Beast Boy and Flamebird encounter ancient evil in the Land of the Rising Sun and meet Japan's new defender, Bushido the warrior. 48pg $3.50

WildCATS Vol 2 #13 (Joe Casey & Sean Philips; *WildStorm)* Experience the surreal nature of a life lived between dimensions as we take a mental journey with a being whose powers often defy description. $2.50

Young Justice 23 (Peter David & Todd Nauck + Lary Stucker) The Young Justice gang goes down under to support Cissie (the former Arrowette) as she and the US archery team compete in the Australia Games. $2.50

Marvel

Conan: The Flame & The Fiend 2 (of 3; Roy Thomas & Geoff Isherwood + Sandu Florea) Continuing the new adventure set during Conan's mercenary days as a war chief. Alone and separated from his men, the Cimmerian battles the dreaded Bone dragon of Kulan Gath. $2.99

Fantastic Four 33 (John Francis Moore & Salvador Larocca + Art Thibert) Hot on the trail of a mysterious saboteur, the Four find themselves up against other-dimensional explorers, revenge-hungry alien warlords, ghostly hot-rodders and (worse) the locals. $2.25

NEW **Hellcat** 1 (of 3; Steve Englehart & Norm Breyfogle) *See Close-Up, above.*

Inhumans 4 (of 4; Carlos Pacheco & Jose Ladronn) If Black Bolt and the Royal Family succeed in their assassination mission, the Inhumans will be freed, but intergalactic war will engulf the galaxy. If they fail, the slavery will go on forever. $2.99

Marvel Boy 2 (of 6; Grant Morrison & J.G. Jones) Marvel Boy declares war on the human race! First stop is the Big Apple, and the UN pays a hefty price. But the world's governments have an answer of their own for Nor-Varr in the form of the Bannermen. $2.99

Mutant X #23 (Howard Mackie & Tom Lyle + Andrew Pepoy) This issue features the chaotic climax of the battle that has been building for a while now – and not everyone is going to walk away from it alive. $2.25

Power Pack 2 (of 4; S.C. Bury & Colleen Doran + Terry Austin) What is more frightening, battling the alien Snarks, or the first day at a new school? The Power Pack kids are about to find out. $2.99

Spider-Man: Death & Destiny 2 (of 3; Lee Weeks & Weeks + Richard Case) A vengeful Spider-Man hunts down Doctor Octopus for the murder of Captain George Stacy, but is Peter Parker neglecting the promise he made to the dying man? $2.99

Spider-Woman 15 (John Byrne & Bart Sears + Randy Elliott) It's a bad day all round for young Mattie as a fight on the bus leads to her expulsion from school. Worse still, Spider-Woman's rematch with Flesh brings her into contact with the demented duo Itch and Scratch. . $2.25

Thor 27 (Dan Jurgens & Erik Larsen + Klaus Janson) Crusher Creel has made off with Dr. Jane Foster in the hope of curing his wife, Titania. But the Thunder God is in hot pursuit, and when the two combatants meet, more than egos that will be bruised. $2.25

Uncanny X-Men 384 (Chris Claremont & Adam Kubert + Tim Townsend) Still in Moscow the team desperately attempts to pry information from their prisoner, the extraterrestrial Slaver, but the price of this knowledge may doom Cable and Phoenix. $2.25

X-Men 2000 (Chris Claremont & Scott Eaton + Scott Hanna) Someone has gained control of Bastion's Prime Sentinel activation codes, and the power to unleash a legion of cyborgs bent on the destruction of all mutants. Annual. 48pg $3.50

X-Men: The Hidden Years 10 (John Byrne & Byrne + Tom Palmer) Candy Southern, Cyclops and Marvel Girl must be extra vigilant to find Angel. Meanwhile Professor X and the Beast track down a new mutant, but when they find a young girl and a mutant-hunting Sentinel, they learn that all is not as it seems. $2.50

ONE-SHOT **X-Men The Movie** (Ralph Maccio & Anthony Williams + Andy Lanning) Storm, Cyclops, Jean Grey, Rogue and Wolverine were all born with bizarre powers. Now the mysterious Professor X gathers together this team of mutants to form the X-Men. 48pg $5.95

ONE-SHOT **X-Men The Movie** (various; tpbk) The official comicbook adaptation of the X-Men Movie, plus classic stories containing key characters from the film. Variant cover. 144pg $5.95

ON SALE WEEK ENDING

JULY 15

Dark Horse

Angel 9 (Christopher Golden & Tom Sniegoski + Eric Powell) Angel is hunting a monster, though he is not certain if it's the right monster. Kate Lockley and her men are in the sewers, looking for the one she thinks is responsible: Angel! Oh man, no reward is worth this! Variant cover. $2.95

Battle Gods: Warriors of the Chaak 4 (of 9; Francisco Ruiz Velasco) While the international championship fights are in full swing and Takan burns to avenge his master, the best fighters are receiving mysterious invitations to another tournament. $2.95

ONE-SHOT **Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Crash Test Demons** (Andi Watson & Cliff Richards + Joe Pimentel; tpbk) Collects issues #9-11 of the ongoing series. As Sunnydale becomes an increasingly hazardous place to re-kill the undead, Buffy must again confront her old enemy Selke. 80pg $9.95

Digimon 3 (various) Seven kids from Earth continue to explore the strange digital world they are trapped in, but forces from inside and outside the group are making that hard. $2.95

ONE-SHOT **Last Day In Vietnam** (Will Eisner; Maverick; graphic novel) A memoir of stories about soldiers who are engaged not only in the daily hostilities of war but also in larger, more personal combat. Some of the stories are comical, some heart-rending, some frightening, and all have the human contact at which Eisner excels. Brown ink on antique paper. 80pg $10.95

NEW **Space Circus** 1 (of 4; Mark Evanier & Sergio Aragonés) Time was when kids used to dream of running away to the circus. But not now, ah no. Now young Todd Cooper has grand plans of running away to join the Doodah Brothers' Astral Travelling Entertainment and Fun Brigade, which travels from planet to planet with its incredible cast of

Greebles, Flurps, Bearded Plankton, and Klone Klowns. $2.95

DC Comics

Adventures of Superman 582 *(Superman: Arkham* 2 of 4; J.M. Dematteis & Mike Miller + José Marzan Jr) Lois Lane, the richest, most powerful woman in the world, should not really care about the Kryptonian super-villain named Superman, yet there is something about him... Nevertheless it will not stop her conducting sadistic experiments on him. Mind you, isn't that what all women do to the ones they love? $2.25

Azrael: Agent of the Bat 68 (Dennis O'Neil & Roger Robinson + James Pascoe) Stranded in the desert with his malevolent and bloodthirsty counterpart, Azrael fights to save the life of the mother he never knew. $2.50

Batman/Huntress *(Cry for Blood* 4 of 6; Greg Rucka & Rick Burchett) An examination of Helena Bertinelli's early years shows how a traumatised young girl becomes an angry, merciless vigilante. How was the Dark Knight responsible for helping to forge Helena's costumed identity? $2.50

Brass 2 (John Arcudi & Carlos D'Anda + Richard Bennett; *WildStorm)* One of the most distinctive WildStorm characters comes along to show Hershel Goldstein a whole new world as the two are transported to a war-ravaged alien dimension. $2.50

Creature Commandos 5 (of 8; Timothy Truman & Scot Eaton + Ray Kryssing) On a world called Terra Arcana the Creature Commandos have infiltrated a nomadic convoy heading straight into the heart of Lord Saturna's desert stronghold. $2.50

DC Two Thousand #1 (of 2; Tom Peyer & Val Semeiks + Prentis Rollins) The original JSA are visited by a collection of impressive and frighteningly futuristic heroes calling themselves the JLA, and claiming be from the year 2000. These heroes want the JSA to help save the future, but the JSA wonder whether that future is really worth the bother. 64pg $6.95

Detective Comics 748 (Greg Rucka + Jordan B. Gorfinkel & various) The war between the Original Gothamites and the Deserters gets more intense. Time is running out for Batman to discover the culprit behind the bombing raid that has put Gordon and the entire GCPD on edge. $2.50

The Flash Annual 13 (Chuck Dixon & Alcatena) Flash Jay Garrick and Argentina's greatest heroes are held captive by eerie supernatural forces. Salamanca uses her mystical powers to turn the tide against an army of the strangest beings any of our heroes have ever encountered. 48pg $3.50

NEW **Hellblazer Special: Bad Blood** 1 (of 4; Jamie Delano & Philip Bond; *Vertigo)* Royalists look away now. The year is 2025, and Charles III of England is on his deathbed. The only heir would appear to be an illegitimate young half-Pakistani woman. The search for the last Royal is on, and a 72 year-old John Constantine is hunting too. $2.95

Hourman 18 (Tom Peyer & Rags Morales + David Meikis) Whatever else troubles Hourman, he can always take pride in being a member of the Justice Society of America. But Hourman's glory days may come to an end sooner than he thinks. $2.50

ONE-SHOT **House of Mystery 1: Millennium Edition** (various) Reprinting DC's first ever horror comic from 1951. The stories in here include *Wanda was a Werewolf, I Fell in Love with a Witch,* and *Man or Monster?* One gets the feeling that Edward D. Wood Jr. would have had a B-Movie field day. . $2.50

Impulse 64 (Todd Dezago & various) Despite an astonishing last-ditch rescue effort, Bart must say goodbye to his oldest friend in an emotional landmark issue. $2.50

MAD XL #5 (The Usual Gang of Idiots) Mort Drucker is the spotlighted artist in this issue that includes part 5 of the 6-part serialisation of the long-out-of-print *The MAD World of William M. Gaines.* 96pg b&w $9.95

ONE-SHOT **New York: The Big City** (Will Eisner) In this personal view of urban life, Eisner shows how small elements make up the big city through 70 vignettes based around everyday elements such as windows, subways and stoops. 144pg b&w $12.95

Nightwing 47 (Chuck Dixon & Patrick Zircher + José Marzan Jr) In the aftermath of all that went before, Tad must pay the price for his unforgivable crime, ending his partnership with Nightwing and plunging further into madness. $2.25

Scooby-Doo 38 (John Rozum + Bob Fingerman & various) Even when the gang goes on holiday they find a mystery. It's spooky summertime fun as Mystery Inc finds jaguar-god ghosts in the South American jungle and computer creepiness along the California coastline. $1.99

ONE-SHOT **Star Trek Voyager – Avalon Rising** (Janine Ellen Young + Doselle Young & David A. Roach; *WildStorm)* When a crucial mission must be performed on an inhospitable world, only one Voyager crew member can function on the planet's surface for even a short time: The holographic doctor. 48pg ... $5.95

FINAL ISSUE **Stars and S.T.R.I.P.E.** 14 (Geoff Johns & Lee Moder + Dan Davis) The Star-Spangled Kid is faced with the greatest villain of her young career – a villain called Dad. Plus, who is destined to be the new S.T.R.I.P.E.? $2.50

Superman Adventures 47 (Kelley Puckett & Aluir Amancio + Terry Austin) When Superman faces an armada of alien ships surrounding the Earth, he finds himself helpless against their greatest weapon: a ray that shrinks him to the size of a microbe. $1.99

NEW **Superman: The Dailies Vol 1** (Jerry Siegel & Joe Shuster; tpbk) The first of three editions reprinting the strips featured in the Superman: The Dailies hardback. Critical elements in the Superman mythos were introduced in the strips, which appeared from 1939 to 1940. 176pg 11" x 9" b&w $14.95

Swamp Thing 5 *(Killing Time* 2 of 3; Brian K. Vaughan & Roger Peterson + Mark Lipka; *Vertigo)* As Teféé continues to explore her powers and her purpose, she has to make an agonising decision, bringing her face to face with both sides of her heritage. Mature readers. $2.50

ONE-SHOT **Tom Strong Book One** (Alan Moore & various; *ABC)* Collecting Tom Strong #1-7. Recalling the remarkable exploits of the century-long career of ABC's hero. Enemies encountered include the Moriarty-like Paul Saveen, and Nazi super-woman Ingrid Weiss, who sees Tom not only as an enemy, but as an ideal mate. 208pg $24.95

Transmetropolitan 36 (Warren Ellis & Darrick Robertson + Rodney Ramos; *Vertigo)* The mind and typewriter of Spider Jerusalem is pitted against the media, the money, and the White House – and it all comes tumbling down for one of them. Prepare to be launched into Year Four with a new rulebook. Mature readers. $2.50

Marvel

Amazing Spider-Man 21 (Howard Mackie & Erik Larsen + John Beatty) After setting Spider-Man up with the tantalising chance to win back his original costume, Alistair Smythe has thrown every Spider-Slayer at him – except one. $2.25

NEW **Avengers Infinity** 1 (of 4; Roger Stern & Sean Chen + Scott Hanna) Unknowable and unfathomable, the Infinites are about to confront a team of Avengers consisting of Thor, Tigra, Moondragon, Photon and Quasar. $2.99

Avengers Universe 2 (various) Three complete comicbooks in one volume, with character biographies and introductions. This months sees the reprinting of Avengers #13-15. $4.99

Black Panther 22 (Christopher Priest & Sal Velluto + Bob Almond) Trapped among the spirit worlds by a mystery Marvel villain, T'Challa's only hope to heal his battered body and to reunite his soul with flesh lies with the Egyptian deity Khonshu, and his earthly avatar Moon Knight. $2.50

Cable 83 (Robert Weinberg & Michael Ryan) A man subject to an unholy force, a hidden chamber in the Sinai mountains, and two women mysteriously drawn to Nathan Summers are all the pieces in this complex puzzle. $2.25

Daredevil 16 (Brian Michael Bendis & David Mack) Daily Bugle star reporter Ben Urich has been given the assignment of a lifetime: the trial of the Kingpin. But why has he chosen to write about a mentally disturbed boy instead? $2.99

Generation X #67 *(Counter X: Shockwave – Come On Die Young* 1 of 4; Warren Ellis + Brian Wood & Steve Pugh) Showing that he can outdo even Stan Lee in the unwieldy title stakes, Warren Ellis begins his second story-arc. In #63 Westchester Academy was closed and Synch disappeared. But how did it all happen? $2.25

Iron Man 32 *(The Sons of Yin Sin* 2 of 3; Joe Quesada + Frank Tieri & Alitha Martinez + Rob Hunter) Has the armoured Avenger joined forces with the Sons of Yin Sin? Touring their flying technological utopia, Iron Man learns this strange group's innermost secrets and discovers a shocking fact. $2.25

Magneto: Dark Seduction 4 (of 4; Fabian Nicieza & Roger Cruz) The secret of Carrion Cove has been revealed, but can even Quicksilver and the Scarlet Witch prevent it from falling into Magneto's hands? $2.99

Punisher 6 (of 12; Garth Ennis & Steve Dillon + Jimmy Palmiotti) It looks like bad news when Ma Gnucci and family finally track down the Punisher – but bad news for whom? $2.99

Spider-Girl 24 (Tom Defalco & Pat Olliffe + Al Williamson) How can Spider-Girl beat the martial arts might of Dragonfist? Find out this plus where the horrible rascal came from and what his connection to Danny Rand is. ... $2.25

Spider-Man Universe 6 (various) Three complete stories plus biographies. This month's reprints are Amazing Spider-Man #19, Peter Parker Spider-Man #19 and Spider-Girl #20. .. $4.99

X-Men: Children of the Atom 6 (of 6; Joe Casey & Paul Smith) Even as Cyclops, Angel, Beast and Iceman ignore Professor X's orders to stay away from the final battle with the Anti-Mutant Militia, Xavier and Agent Duncan race against the clock to save the life of Jean Grey, who must in turn save the life of the Scab. $2.99

DC CLOSE-UP

Hitman/Lobo: That Stupid Bastich!

DC Comics

Writer: Garth Ennis
Artist: Doug Mahnke

Gotham City has had its fair share of trouble. But when the deadliest bounty hunter in the DC Universe decides to stop by Noonan's bar for a drink it sets off a fight that makes No Man's Land look like a tea party. 48pg ... $3.95

ON SALE JULY 19

ONE-SHOT **X-Men Visionaries: Joe Madureira** (Scott Lobdell & Joe Madureira + Tim Townsend; tpbk) Title highlighting the work of Madureira who sprang into the X-Men spotlight in 1994 with a look heavily reminiscent of the Japanese manga style. Includes Uncanny X-Men #325, and #341-343, plus the double-sized #350. 224pg $17.95

ON SALE WEEK ENDING
JULY 22

Dark Horse

ONE-SHOT **Dark Horse Maverick 2000** (various; *Maverick)* Diana Schultz acts as editor on this anthology of the best that Maverick has to offer, including old favourite creators plus a few of the new boys. Includes a new *Body Bags* story and a short piece from Stan Sakai about going abroad with Sergio Aragonés. Mature. 48pg b&w $3.95

Gunsmith Cats: Kidnapped 9 (of 10; Kenichi Sonoda) When little Flora comes to after her abduction, she finds she is back in Jeena's house, and Jeena's mother has an explosive collar around her neck, just like her daughter! Mature readers. b&w $2.95

Masakazu Katsura's Shadow Lady 22 *(Sudden Death* 3 of 5; Masakazu Katsura) Trapped in Bright's shower, Aimi is helpless as the pounding water washes off her magic eyeshadow. If Bright sees her true form, her secret is out – and the Demon World Police will kill her! $2.50

ONE-SHOT **Sergio Aragonés' Groo: Jamboree** (Sergio Aragonés + Mark Evanier & Aragonés; tpbk) What happens when Groo thinks he has eaten Rufferto, his only friend in the entire world? This is a two-part tale, plus two other stories to make up this volume. 96pg b&w $9.95

SpyBoy 10 (Peter David & Pop Mhan + Norman Lee) The 10th issue unearths something of an homage to the traditional spy genre, with death-defying action sequences, falling out of planes, and more crazy spy gadgets than you can shake an exploding biro at. $2.95

ONE-SHOT **Star Wars: Jedi Academy – Leviathan** (Kevin J. Anderson & David Carrasco Jr + Mark Heike; tpbk) In the eight years since the fall of the Empire, Luke Skywalker has trained a new group of Jedi Knights, among them the warrior woman Kirana Ti, the sky-hermit Streen, the scholar and lore-master Tionne, and Luke's greatest student, the brash Kyp Durron. 96pg $11.95

Star Wars: Jedi Council 2 (of 4; Randy Stradley & Davidé Fabbri + Christian Dalla Vecchia) The Jedi task force sent to the Yinchorri system is met with a hostile reception, and they soon find themselves facing overwhelming odds on three different worlds. ... $2.95

DC Comics

Aquaman 71 (Dan Jurgens & steve Epting + Norm Rapmund) Aquaman journeys to the prehistoric kingdom at the centre of the Earth to encounter that world's own warrior-king. The two regal powerhouses do not hit it off; but they soon must set aside their differences to contend with a greater threat. $2.50

Batman: Dark Victory 10 (of 13; Jeph Loeb & Tim Sale) In a city divided by Freaks and Gangsters can there be justice for anyone? As Batman searches for Harvey Dent, Mr Freeze

unexpectedly enters the picture. Plus, while the Hang Man's noose tightens around Gotham City, Dick Grayson makes a startling discovery. ... $2.95

Batman: Gotham Knights 7 (Devin Grayson + John Arcudi & various) Badly wounded, Batman struggles to help a hundred innocent citizens victimised by a bomb. Battling overwhelming odds, he is reminded of incidents from his past immediately after the death of his parents. This issue includes a backup story drawn by Steve Ditko. $2.50

Birds of Prey 21 (Chuck Dixon & Butch Guice) Everything comes together as oracle desperately tries to evade Blockbuster's forces, leading her right to the Black Canary. But the crimefighters have met just in time to be surrounded by a group of hired killers, and with no way out. $2.50

Cartoon Network Starring... Cow & Chicken 13 (various) Cow gets a weird allergy attack in *Weak in the Sneeze* and hoofs her way on to Chicken's toboggan team in *Flaming Desire.* $1.99

Deadenders 7 (Ed Brubaker & Warren Pleece + Richard Case; *Vertigo)* The killer Dodge calls in his final marker, forcing Sophie to choose between her immature boyfriend Beezer and compassionate intellectual Daniel. But before facing his fate, Beezer's visions reveal a heartbreaking truth about Daniel's extremely mysterious past. Mature readers. $2.50

The Dreaming 52 (Caitlín R. Kiernan & Christian Højgaard + Ron Randall; *Vertigo)* Having been banished from the Dreaming, The Corinthian indulges his most base appetites in the darkest corners of Bangkok. But he is not alone. A vicious serial killer stalks the very same mean streets, and the now-very-mortal Corinthian experiences how the other half dies when he becomes a killer's prey. Mature readers. .. $2.50

ONE-SHOT **Flash Comics 1: Millennium Edition** (various) Reprinting the Golden Age classic from 1940 which features not only the debut of Jay Garrick, but also the first appearances of Hawkman, Johnny Thunder and more. $3.95

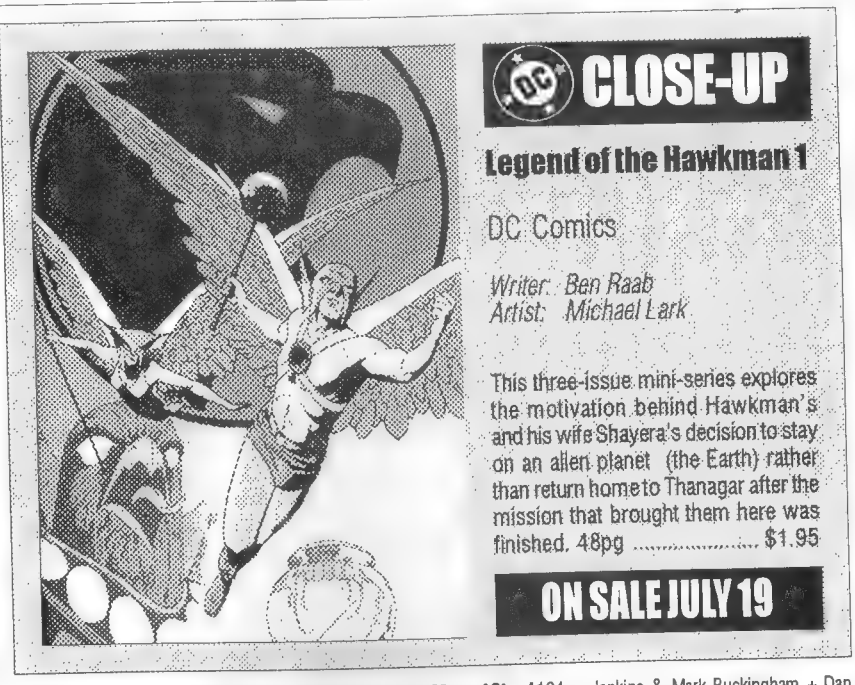
Gen^{13} #55 (Jeff Mariotte & Ed Benes + Vince Russell; *WildStorm)* Fairchild searches the old I.O. facility that housed Project Genesis in the hopes of restoring her powers. But she is not alone, as a stalker shadows the heroine with deadly intentions. Also, find out what the rest of the team is getting up to in Manhattan without their strongest member around. $2.50

ONE-SHOT **Gon on Safari** (Masashi Tanaka) Modern day tales of the world's last dinosaur are featured in this wordless volume. Gon has appeared in a variety of media, including the Tekken 3 video game. Check out a few tales in comicbook format. 176pg b&w $7.95

ONE-SHOT **Hitman/Lobo: That Stupid Bastich!** (Garth Ennis & Doug Mahnke) *See Close-Up on previous page.*

JSA 14 (David S. Goyer + Geoff Johns & Stephen Sadowski + Michael Bair) Extant has succeeded in creating a new universe – one where he can rule with a brutal omnipotence. So how can the JSA hope to get past the all-seeing one's defences? Simple. They enlist the aid of the Dark Lord, Mordru. $2.50

Jenny Sparks: The Secret History of the Authority 2 (of 5; Mark Millar & John McCrea + James Hodgkins; *WildStorm)* On the run from Henry Bendix early in their careers, Apollo and the Midnighter are living on the streets, tackling conspiracies which never make it to the papers. Find out what was being airlifted from the US to the UK for the British General Election campaign. $2.50



CLOSE-UP

Legend of the Hawkman 1

DC Comics

Writer: Ben Raab
Artist: Michael Lark

This three-issue mini-series explores the motivation behind Hawkman's and his wife Shayera's decision to stay on an alien planet (the Earth) rather than return home to Thanagar after the mission that brought them here was finished. 48pg $1.95

ON SALE JULY 19

NEW **Legend of the Hawkman** 1 (of 3; Ben Raab & Michael Lark) *See Close-Up, above.*

Legends of the DC Universe 32 (Christopher Priest & Karl Waller + Mark McKenna) The prophecy of the 18th Letter comes full circle as Wonder Woman's plan draws together, handing Alcemaeon his biggest defeat ever. $2.50

Orion 4 (Walter Simonson & Simonson + Dave Gibbons) Secrets are revealed and tensions mount as we build to next issue's battle between the most powerful of the New Gods. Plus, the luminous Lightray must try to go unnoticed on a secretive journey to Apokolips. $2.50

The Powerpuff Girls 5 (Jennifer Moore + Sean Carolan & Philip Moy) Bubbles loses a baby tooth, and can't wait to swap it for a coin from the Tooth Fairy. But guess who will stop at nothing to get it from her first? $1.99

Robin 80 (Chuck Dixon & Pete Woods + Jesse Delperdang) Tim gets a new roommate, a weapon of destruction from Robin's past comes back to haunt him, and our hero gets a surprise visit from his Dad. How is he going to explain that butler in his closet? $2.25

ONE-SHOT **The Sandman: The Dream Hunters** (Neil Gaiman & Yoshitaka Amano; *Vertigo;* graphic novel) Reprinting the original graphic novel in a softcover edition with gold foil to give the impression of having been painted in gold leaf. The tale is an exploration of Japanese folklore, following the ill-fated romance between a young monk and a magical shape-changing she-fox who pines for him in secret. 136pg . $19.95

Superboy 78 (Karl Kesel & Tom Grummett + Keith Champagne) Superboy, Serling Roquette, Mickey Cannon and the Gadget Guru are all prisoners in outer space. Will the Kid's new abilities be enough to free him and his friends from the clutches of Kossak the Slaver, or are they doomed to a lifetime of slavery? $2.25

NEW **Superman: Last Son of Earth** 1 (Steve Gerber & Doug Wheatley) Astrophysicist Jonathan Kent learns that the Earth is to be destroyed in nine months. What is worse, his wife Martha has fallen pregnant with a child due just days before the end. All hope is lost unless Jonathan can complete a primitive rocket to take his son to a distant planet called Krypton. 48pg $5.95

Superman: The Man of Steel 104 *(Superman: Arkham* 3 of 4; Mark Schultz & Doug Mahnke + Tom Nguyen) The science police are after John Henry Irons for committing the heresy of thinking logically. Can the rusted-out Steel convince Superman that 2 + 2 does not = "fish" before Bounty gets him in his high-tech crosshairs? And who is trying to send Superman a message that may resolve this whole riddle of a world? $2.25

The Titans 19 (Jay Faerber + Devin Grayson & Adam Dekraker + Andy Lanning) Only Tempest may hold the key to resolving the epic war being waged between the Tamaranian and Gordanian outer-space armadas. $2.50

Tom Strong 9 (Alan Moore & various; *ABC)* The latest serving of Strongmania contains a tale of Tom and his wife Dhalua on the isle of Attabar Teru, rendered by cover artist Paul Chadwick. Also includes two more stories. $2.95

Marvel

Bishop: The Last X-Man 12 *(Chronowar* 1 of 3; Jospeh Harris & Geogres Jeanty + Art Thibert) Bishop and Fitzroy finally come face to face, and the winner will rule the world. But what insane plan will the Chronomancer set in motion to turn the tide of battle in his favour? 48pg $2.99

Captain America 33 (Dan Jurgens & Jurgens + Art Thibert) Protocide – the prototype Captain America – is wreaking havoc, and the terrorists known as A.I.M. are to blame. Lord only knows what will happen when this sinister super-soldier goes shield-to-shield with the U.S. Agent. $2.25

Captain Marvel 9 (Peter David & Chriscross + Anibal Rodriguez) The Hyssta have arrived on Earth and only an alliance between Captain Marvel, the Super Skrull and the Silver Surfer can save our world from slipping into an alternate Universe where reptilian parallels of our heroes rule. $2.50

Incredible Hulk 18 (Paul Jenkins & Ron Garney + Sal Buscema) Bruce Banner grapples with how to combat a foe he can neither see nor trace, while Angela and Doc Samson struggle with the man-monster Flux – and each other. Plus, the Hulk must be released to give Bruce Banner respite from his miserable illness, which is just what Ryker has been waiting for. $2.25

Peter Parker, Spider-Man 21 (Paul Jenkins & Mark Buckingham + Dan Green) Spider-Man struggles to pull himself together and accept his recent loss. It sounds like he needs a real heart-to-heart with the Human Torch. . $2.25

NEW **Sentry** 1 (of 5; Paul Jenkins & Jae Lee) *See Close-Up on next page.*

Spider-Girl Presents: The Buzz 3 (of 3; Tom Defalco & Ron Frenz + Sal Buscema) The Buzz and Spider-Girl confront Dr Jade, but what is the secret of the mysterious old Spider-Man foe working with her? And the Buzz may have to make a decision that will cost someone their life. $2.99

Thunderbolts 42 (Fabian Nicieza & Mark Bagley + Greg Adams) Fresh form Avengers Two comes Wonder Man. But what does Simon Williams have against Atlas? And when the Ionic Avenger attacks, will Man-Killer be drawn out of the shadows and into the fray? . $2.25

X-Man 67 *(Counter X: Shockwave – Further Down the Spiral* 1 of 4; Warren Ellis + Steven Grant & Ariel Olivetti) Telling the tale of X-Man. Find out how the directionless outsider transformed into the shamanic figure of today. This apolcalyptic story waltzes across universes and burning worlds, destroying lives and remaking Nate Grey into a 21st Century hero. $2.25

X-Men 104 (Chris Claremont & Leinil Francis Yu + Mark Morales) Continuing the story from Uncanny X-Men #384. Most of our heroes have been captured and are about to be sold into slavery. The trail leads the survivors to Hong Kong, where it is up to Wolverine, Storm, Thunderbird and Phoenix to smash down every door in the criminal heartland of the city. $2.25

ON SALE WEEK ENDING

JULY 29

Dark Horse

Alien vs Predator vs The Terminator 4 (of 4; Mark Schultz & Mel Rubi + Christopher Ivy) Aliens, Predators, Terminators and humans collide with everybody's future at stake. No-one and nothing walks away from this clash unscarred, but the questions remain: Will Ripley regain control of her life? She may come out on top, but will it being a happy ending? $2.95

Blade of the Immortal 47 *(The Gathering* 5 of 15; Hiroaki Samura) Rin has to go to a village close to a critical checkpoint for leaving Edo. The purpose? To follow the last thin thread of hope that she will pursue Anotsu to Kaga and – lest we forget – escape the authorities who unjustly accuse her of murder. Mature readers. b&w $2.95

Buffy the Vampire Slayer 23 (Christopher Golden & Cliff Richards + Joe Pimentel) Who are the Blood of Carthage, and what is their relationship to the demon Vraka? Buffy will find out as she confronts them for the first time. Find out also how Spike is connected to this shadowy group – and how Buffy is thinking of leaving college forever. Photo variant cover. $2.95

Digimon 4 (various) When the Digimon crew travels through a forest of telephone poles they find a village of Yokomon, brethren to the digivolved Biyomon. The village is terrorised by the fiery Meramon, who has turned evil under the influence of the mysterious Black Gear. $2.95

Ghost 22 (Mike Kennedy & Ryan Benjamin) Elisa Cameron takes stock of her violent life of danger and concludes that if she is going to go on being Ghost she needs to build bridges once in a while instead of blowing them up. It's time to make peace with the Furies, Peter, X, her sister – and herself. $2.95

Grendel: Devil's Legacy 5 (of 12; Matt Wagner & The Pander Brothers) Christine Spar finds herself sinking into the depths of doubt and worry. Follow her into round two of the Spar/Tujiro XIV battle, through intrigue and loss, and finally into a surprise meeting with Argent. Mature readers. ... $2.95

ONE-SHOT **Grendel: Past Prime** (Greg Rucka & Matt Wagner) An illustrated prose novel. The ranks of Grendel warriors have now disintegrated into anarchy, but a saviour exists. One lone Grendel seeks the key to restoring the empire, and she will not be taking no for an answer. Mature. 208pg b&w . $14.95

Joker/Mask 3 (of 4; Henry Gilroy & Ramon Bachs + Howard Shum) The new Joker/Mask TV show is a big hit in primetime, but not everyone is happy. Harley wants her old Mr J back, and she enlists Poison Ivy to help her. Ivy, however, has plans of her own, and when Joker/Mask finds he has been duped, he's not going to be laughing. Co-published with DC. $2.95

Star Wars 20 *(Twilight* 2 of 4; John Ostrander & Jan Duursema + Rick Magyar) Quinlan Vos searches for his past, and the Devaronian Villie is his reluctant helper. First stop is the home of Bib Fortuna, right-hand man to the nefarious Jabba the Hutt. Can Quin resist the pull of the dark side when dealing with lowlifes like Bib? . $2.95

ONE-SHOT **Tony Millionaire's Sock Monkey** (Tony Millionaire; Maverick; tpbk) Collecting together all of the Sock Monkey saga revealing exactly how much trouble a toy monkey can cause. Funny unsettling and oddly endearing entertainment featuring Uncle Gabby and Drinky Crow. 96pg b&w ... $9.95

Usagi Yojimbo 39 (Stan Sakai) Looking back at third Century Japan and the founding of the sacred Atsuta Shrine. Yamato-Dake, heir to the Sword of the Gods, made a vow to rid the land of the giant serpent deity of Mount Ibuki. On the way to meet his final foe Yamoto-Dake must battle nature and its most fearsome beasts, including his own fatigue. $2.95

Xena: Warrior Princess 11 (Ian Edginton & Mike Deodato) The gods are incommunicado and the oracles don't work. The hotlines to Olympus are off the hook. And as if that was

bad enough, someone has released the Lamia – the lost tribe of vampire amazons. Also, Helios the sun god has vanished, plunging the world into perpetual darkness. All Hell is breaking loose! Photo variant cover. $2.95

DC Comics

Accelerate 2 (of 4; Richard Kadrey & The Pander Brothers; *Vertigo)* After her mind-expanding trip on Accelerate, Marne searches for her partners-in-crime and delves into the truth about her ghost-in-the-machine boyfriend. But the truth doesn't come cheap in a world where everything is for sale, and Marne must undertake a major heist to buy the information she needs from the radiation-scarred High Priests of the digital age. Mature readers. $2.95

Action Comics 769 *(Superman: Arkham* 4 of 4; Joe Kelly & Kano + Mario Alquiza) A day has passed and Superman has not returned to Arkham. This does not mean that things will return to how they were, ah no. They get worse. The secrets are revealed in the conclusion to this month's blockbuster, setting the stage for next month's *Superman: Emperor.* Does that give you any clues? $2.25

The Authority 17 (Mark Millar & Chris Weston; *WildStorm)* New York is hit by a thousand-foot tidal wave. A volcano erupts in the heart of San Francisco. Africa and Australia are under siege as plagues of insects attack millions of defenceless men, women and children. Do these things just happen? Is it all a wild coincidence? What is behind these inexplicable catastrophes? The Authority hasn't got the foggiest. $2.50

Batman 581 (Larry Hama + Scott McDaniel & McDaniel + Karl Story) The battle between Batman and Orca reaches its conclusion. Find out if Batman can save Camille Bayden-Smythe from the Orcster. Plus, how can he choose to side with the slumlord extraordinaire against Orca's brand of vigilante justice? $2.25

Batman Beyond 11 (Hilary J. Bader & Craig Rousseau + Rob Leigh) Beauty becomes more than skin deep when Gotham's teens start using nanotechnology to improve their bodies. Unfortunately, they become enslaved to the technology's hive-mind intelligence. Can Batman defeat the enemy without hurting the children of the city? $1.99

Batman: It's Joker Time 3 (of 3; Bob Hall) Time is running out as Batman closes in on the location of the Joker-run TV broadcast. Will the Dark Knight stop his nemesis from committing wholesale slaughter of live television? Prestige format. 48pg $4.95

Catwoman 84 (Bronwyn Carlton & Staz Johnson + Wayne Faucher) Catwoman teams up with Harley Quinn, and they are hellbent on getting Gordon. This issue marks the end of Catwoman as we know her, and the redirecting of the story into foreign turf. $2.25

Countdown 4 (of 8; Jeff Mariotte & Aaron Lopresti + Randy Emberlin; *WildStorm)* Just beyond our atmosphere an armada of alien ships is targeting Earth for destruction. Still oblivious to the threat are four newly super-powered Americans who are just trying to get along with each other and figure out how best to use their abilities. Captain Ben Randall of the US Air Force is the only man on Earth who has all the facts necessary to save the day, but he has no idea where these four could-be heroes are. $2.95

Dexter's Laboratory 13 (Dave Roman + Brian Swenlin & various) Dexter is a genius, but he cannot tell a good joke. Can science give him a funny-bone? Plus, only Dee-Dee can stop the lab from blowing up in *Forget Me Not.* $1.99

The Flash 164 (Geoff Johns & Angel Unzueta + Doug Hazlewood) The Flash – the fastest man alive – can no longer stake a claim to that title. He has lost all of his powers and he now sits in a gaol cell in a world that has never even heard of the Flash. Today he is plain old Wally West. Beaten at the hands of police (one of whom is very familiar) he is sure he has entered an alternate reality. But he is wrong. $2.25

Flinch 14 (various; *Vertigo)* A man with car trouble calls on the wrong woman for help in *Resolve,* while a man obsessed by the bizarre death of his childhood friend uses unorthodox means to discover his last wishes in *Grave Wisdom.* Finally, an amorous young man gets to live out a sexual fantasy in *If Wishes Had Wings.* Mature. $2.50

Green Lantern Annual 9 (Tim Truman & various) Kyle and the rest of the world gasp at the incredible power of the super-strong, sword-wielding Tunisian hero known as Sala. But will her powers – and those of the Green Lantern – be enough to stop the deadly demon Pazuzu? 48pg $3.50

NEW **Hawkman Archives** Vol I (Gardner Fox & various; hbk) Some of the stories that helped to inspire Legend of the Hawkman are reprinted here. This volume features the first appearance of the Silver Age Hawkman and Hawkgirl, taken from the Brave and the Bold #34-36 and #42-44 and Mystery in Space #87-90. 240pg 7" x 10" $49.95

Hellblazer 152 *(Good Intentions* 2 of 6; Brian Azzarello & Marcelo Frusin; *Vertigo)* Arriving in Doglick, West Virginia, John Constantine encounters the Fermins, a family so nasty they make even him flinch. Mature. $2.50

Hitman 53 (Garth Ennis & John McCrea + Garry Leach) When Tommy Monaghan tries to help an old friend, he winds up facing the deadliest adversary of his career. Characters old and new gather together for the fight of Tommy Monaghan's life. $2.50

ONE-SHOT **The Human Target** (Peter Milligan & Edvin Biukovic; *Vertigo)* Christopher Chance is an assassin's worst nightmare. The master of impersonation has a terrific time leading them a merry dance. But what happens when a job has finished and he has to become himself? 104pg $12.95

JLA 45 (Mark Waid & Howard Porter + Drew Geraci) In a hidden Antarctic base, the JLA finally confronts its greatest enemy and is forced to face a horrible secret kept by one of the League's own. $2.25

Lazarus Five #3 (of 5; various) The team begins to close in on the mysterious human aiding the Decayed Ones in an issue that explores the world – and the heart – of Digit, the Lazarus Five's smallest inquisitor. $2.50

The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen 6 (of 6; Alan Moore & Kevin O'Neill; *ABC)* With grim finality the nefarious stalwart band combat the nefarious Doctor and his evil cohorts on land, on sea, and in the air. . $2.95

Mostly Wanted 3 (of 4; Scott Lobdell & Roberto Flores + Mark Irwin; *WildStorm)* While hiding from the law, Sister Cren finally takes the time to explain to Andi how they finally got into this mess, and it involves a secret The Functionary wants to keep quiet at all costs. Can Andi and Cren set aside their differences to release this bombshell? $2.50

ONE-SHOT **Mysterious Suspense 1: Millennium Edition** (Steve Ditko + D.C. Glanzman & Ditko + Rocke Masterioso) Reprinting the 1967 debut of the Question. The morally ambitious anti-hero went on to become a DC Comics mainstay. $2.50

The Patriots 8 (Jonathan Peterson & Michael Ryan + Randy Elliott; *WildStorm)* Unexpected characters show up at inopportune moments. Learn the secret of Rocky's past with Nigel Harrington, and why theirs is a relationship that might never be repaired. $2.50

ONE-SHOT **Police Comics 1: Millennium Edition** (various) Reprinting the 1941 debut of the JLA's Plastic Man. Also taking their first bows are Chic Carter, Phantom Lady, the Human Bomb, Firebrand and more. $3.95

NEW **The Remarkable Worlds of Phineas B. Fuddle** 1 (of 4; Boaz Yakin & Erez Yakin; *Paradox)* A brilliant Victorian scientist decides to use his home-made time machine to improve some of the great civilisations of the past, and sets off a chain reaction that threatens to unhinge the universe. 48pg $5.95

NEW **Robin 80-Page Giant** 1 (Chuck Dixon & Diego Barretto) Wedding bells are in the air, and they are not for Robin and Spoiler. Jack Drake is getting hitched again, which surely means he will be settling down and becoming mellow and pleasant to be around. 80pg $5.95

Supergirl 48 (Peter David & Leonard Kirk + Robin Riggs) Having lost someone very dear to her, Supergirl is more than just going to hold the guilty party responsible. By the end of this issue, her fury will result in tragic consequences. $2.25

Superman & Bugs Bunny 3 (of 4; Mark Evanier & various) If Elmer Fudd can gain the powers of Superman, then Daffy Duck can certainly become the Duck Knight Detective. Who will let *him* in the Batcave? $2.50

Superman vs Predator 3 (of 3; David Micheline & Alex Maleev) It's a multiple showdown in the jungles of Central America as Superman must overcome the alien virus that has sapped his powers. Co-published with Dark Horse Comics. 48pg $4.95

Wonder Woman 160 (Brian K. Vaughan & Scott Kolins + Dan Panosian) Answering a summons from Cheetah, Wonder Woman arrives in New York only to discover she has a completely different foe to face. And what does Batman's shape-changing enemy want? Well, just a little bit of the sacred clay that goes to make up the Amazon Princess. $2.25

Marvel

NEW **Avataars: Covenant of the Shield** 1 of 3; Len Kaminski & Oscar Jimenez + Eduardo Alpuente) In a far-off realm of Eurth, a deadly experiment is underway – one which could have dire ramifications for our own world. There, the legendary Captain Avalon has gathered a band of hauntingly familiar characters to meets the challenge of the Dreadlord. $2.99

Avengers 32 (Kurt Busiek & George Pérez + Al Vey) The Black Widow guest-stars as the secret history of Madame Masque is revealed. Who is Masque? Who is Benedict. They're not who you think. Meanwhile, the Avengers discover who the Grim Reaper is working for. $2.25

Before the Fantastic Four: Ben Grimm & Logan 3 (of 3; Larry Hama & Haare Andrews + Walden Wong) The fiery finale of this Cold War caper features a speeding Siberian prison train, a ticked-off Carl Danvers, a hijacked Russian jet, a determined Black Widow, and a couple of bare-knuckled brawlers named Ben Grimm and Logan. $2.99

Before the Fantastic Four: Reed Richards 1 (of 3; Peter David & Duncan Fegredo) Follow intrepid young scientist Reed Richards across the globe on a quest to find the mysterious Claw of Bast, and ancient artifact of amazing power. There is only one catch – he's not the only one looking for it. A recently scarred Victor von Doom is looking to capitalise on the Claw's ability to heal. $2.99

Captain America: The Classic Years Vol II (Joe Simon & Jack Kirby; tpbk) Restored and recoloured reprint of Captain America Comics #6 to #10. Whether confronting sinister supervillains or subversive saboteurs, the super soldier and his star-spangled sidekick swashbuckle their way through a world at war. 216pg $24.95

Deadpool 44 *(Cat Trap* 1 of 2; Christopher Priest & Jim Calafiore + Jon Holdredge) The Merc with the Mouth meets the Urban Avenger in a major clash of personalities. Plus, back at the homestead, what are the Constrictor and Titania up to? .. $2.25

Gambit 20 (Fabian Nicieza & Joe St. Pierre + Sean Parsons) What did the New Sonhope to gain by using Fontanelle as a fact finder for his mad plans? And what does this mysterious power player really want with Gambit? It's more mystery and action with reflections on the past and questions about the future of the leader of the X-Men. $2.25

NEW **Iron Man: Bad Blood** 1 (of 4; David Michelenie & Bob Layton) For years Tony Stark has duelled with the hated evil industrialist Justin Hammer, and now it's time to settle the feud once and for all. A near-successful attempt on his life by the high-powered Hit Squad prompts the armoured Avenger to retaliate, but somebody else is pulling the strings. $2.99

Marvel: The Lost Generation 6 (of 12; Roger Stern & John Byrne + Al Milgrom) Together, Fireball, the Black Fox, Oxbow, Pixie, Blackjack Positron and Effigy are the First Line, the foremost super-team of their age. But even their superior numbers are no guarantee of victory against the villany of Mönsoon, Howler, Scythe, Talan and Axis. $2.99

Marvel Knights 3 (Chuck Dixon & Eduardo Barreto + Klaus Janson) The Punisher takes the fight down below to the big bad troll daddy himself, Ulik. Meanwhile, Daredevil uncovers the true reason behind the Asgardian army's attack – but is it in time to save the city? $2.99

Universe X #0 (Alex Ross + Jim Krueger & Doub Braithwaite + Bill Reinhold) The Earth X saga continues. Reed Richards thought that the Earth was saved. Galactus was gone. The Celestials were defeated. But when three old friends (the Angel, Nighthawk and Gargoyle) meet, they are accosted by a nightmarish vision of the future of

MARVEL COMICS CLOSE-UP

Sentry 1

Marvel Comics

Writer: Paul Jenkins
Artist: Jae Lee

The story so far... One week prior to creating the Fantastic Four in 1961, Stan Lee and artist Alf Rosen launched what should have been Marvel's flagship title. But it wasn't to be, and Sentry was overlooked until now. Several years of research are said to have been poured into this title, including some collaboration with creator Stan Lee. Check out this title to discover what history intended comic fans to forget. $2.99

ON SALE JULY 19

the Marvel Universe. 48pg $3.99

Wolverine 154 (Rob Liefeld + Eric Stephenson & Liefeld) A price has been placed on Wolverine's head, and Deadpool aims to collect. But there is more than a payday at play for the Merc With the Mouth. For even Wade Wilson holds something dear – and it hangs in the balance. His contractors are known only as the Watchtower, but nobody knows who or what they are. ... $2.25

X-Force 106 *(Counter X: Shockwave – Murder Ballads* 1 of 4; Warren Ellis + Ian Edginton & Whilce Portacio) Pete Wilson, an ex-government spook with a reform agenda, teaches the X-Force secrets known only by a man who has spent his life on the underside of the world. $2.25

X-Men Universe 10 (various) The usual deal; three in one. This time the double-sized X-Men #100 and Gambit #16 get an airing. 80pg $4.99

X-Men Unlimited 28 (Joe Pruett & Brett Booth + Salvador Regla) Following the events of Uncanny X-Men #384 and X-Men #104, the Children of the Atom find themselves around the world in the wide-open nation of Russia. Plus, the Merc with the Mouth spreads his trademark brand of good lovin' in a lethal lead-in to Deadpool #45. $2.99

RELEASED & ON SALE IN

JULY

Aardvark-Vanaheim

Cerebus 256 *(Going Home* 25 of 34; Dave Sim & Gerhard) For the first time in Cerebus's 22 year history the action moves off Estarcion and on to another continent entirely as Mary Ernestway's flashback yarn begins. 24pg b&w $2.25

Abstract Studio

Strangers in Paradise Vol VIII: My Other Life (Terry Moore; tpbk) Collecting issues #25-30 of Strangers in Paradise Vol III. It contains the powerful and moving story of an horrendous plane crash that rips the life of Francine, Katchoo and David apart. To make matters worse Katchoo discovers that the crash was no accident, as the demons from her other life come back to claim her for good. 120pg 7" x 10" 120pg b&w $14.95

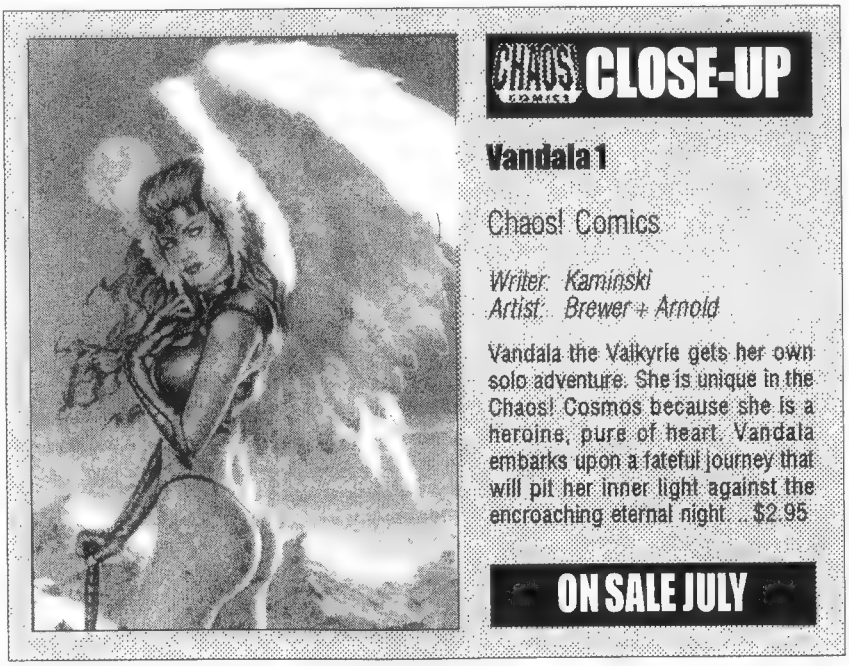
AC Comics

Golden Age Men of Mystery 24 (various) A full-scale invasion of Earth is launched by creatures from outer space, and only Captain Flash, America's Atomic Hero, can save the planet from alien domination. 52pg b&w $6.95

Rocky Lane Western 2 (various) One of the silver screen's most exciting Western heroes, Allan "Rocky" Lane, thunders into the pages of his own book once again. Astride the great Stallion Blackjack, Rocky takes on *The Bloody Gap Plot* and fights it out with the *Trouble Boss* of a railroad crew. 44pg b&w $5.95

Acclaim Comics

Quantum & Woody 27 (Priest & Bright + Tanghal) The aftermath of the tragic consequences of last issue fall into place here. Did the goat live or die? Does Woody finally retire the Woodchuck costume? What is going on with Master Darque? 48pg . $2.50


CHAOS! COMICS
CLOSE-UP
Vandala 1
Chaos! Comics
Writer: Kaminski
Artist: Brewer + Arnold
Vandala the Valkyrie gets her own solo adventure. She is unique in the Chaos! Cosmos because she is a heroine, pure of heart. Vandala embarks upon a fateful journey that will pit her inner light against the encroaching eternal night. ..$2.95
ON SALE JULY

ACG Comics

ACG's Amazing Comics Starring Dragon Lady 4 (of 4; Milton Caniff) The original femme fatale and greatest female villain of all time Dragon Lady is showcased in her first adventure. b&w $2.95

Cop Called Tracy 17 (Chester Gould) Classics from 1950. Dick Tracy follows up the mystery of the one-armed man and discovers more than he bargained for. b&w $2.95

Green Berets 4 (Robin Moore & Joe Kubert) It is the '60s, it's Vietnam, and things are not looking good. The Berets are paid to take it as it comes, and it comes pretty hard. b&w $2.95

Millinium 2.5: The Buck Rogers Saga 3 (Dick Colkin) Classic strip from the '30s, reprinted here in comicbook form. b&w $2.95

Pulp Action Starring The Shadow 9 (Walter Gibson & Vernon Green) More dark crimes and more dark villains from the files of the Shadow. A classic tale from the mid-'40s. b&w $2.95

Star Hawks 2 (Ron Goulard & Gil Kane) Star Hawks Chavez and Jaxan rush off to stop an assassination attempt on Emperor Rin. Explosive, killer androids, a robot dog called Snifer, and great sci-fi art from Gil Kane. $2.95

Amaze Ink/ Slave Labor

NEW **Babysitter** 1 (Andy Ristaino) Well, before this it was Life of a Fetus, and now Ristaino seems to have matured a little. A little. Here he follows the exploits of Setsuko Kagaku and her first week at a new school. Naturally she finds herself tangling with robots, demons from Hell and tentacled beasts. b&w 24pg $3.50

Charm School 2 (Elizabeth Watasin) Things are heating up in the town of Little Salem. Good teen witch Bunny cannot get that bad fairy, Fairer Than, out of her mind. Is it love? Or insidious enchantment? 24pg b&w $2.95

Little Gloomy 4 (Landry Walker & Eric Jones) Simon has captured Gloomy, imprisoned Larry and Carl, and chopped Frank into tiny pieces. Can things get any worse? I mean, you would think the army of the undead was about to walk into the room with Boris the hunchback, or something... 24pg b&w $2.95

ONE-SHOT **Mister Blank** (Christopher Hicks; tpbk) Collecting all 14 issues of the Mister Blank series, plus the hard-to-find zero issue. Read the entire saga of Sam Smith, featuring killer robots, mime femme fatales (or is that femmes fatale?) mad science and global conspiracies. 360pg b&w $29.95

Sparks 4 (Lawrence Marvit) Astronomy abounds as Jo and Galahad learn about the stars, comets and constellations with a telescope Jo builds out of car parts. Plus, Galahad learns how far a knight of the round table will go for love – and a good cupcake. 48pg b&w $4.95

Spook Girl 3 (Mike Macropoulos) Trixie McGillicutty stars in this nearly-all *Giant Robot* issue. Spookgirl's pup Bongo gets a robot dog toy, but when Bongo's plaything plays back, all of Neutron city is in peril. 24pg b&w $2.95

NEW **The Taxidermy** 1 (Roman Dirge) A creepy tale exploring the origin of the taxidermy character from the Lenore series. A bored taxidermist decides to spice things up a bit by putting together bits of various animals, working towards the taxidermy holy grail: a human being. $3.95

Antarctic Press

Gold Digger Vol II #13 (Fred Perry) Julia fights in the tournament of Arms to win back her title as Arms Master of Jade. However, the odds are stacked well against her. 20pg $2.95

Mangazine 13 (various) All the hijinks of Ninja High School, all the action of World War II, all the outlandish exploring of Gold Digger and all the holy heroics of Warrior Nun Areala. This plus extra stories and art. 100pg+ $8.95

Ninja High School 75 (Ben Dunn) An all-new direction in the lives of the Ninja High School crew graces this landmark issue. 24pg $2.95

Ninja High School Perfect Memory 3 (various) This issue deals with Ninja High School #40-74, providing story critiques and behind-the-scenes goss for each issue. There are also mechanical and character overviews, plus never-before-published material. 96pg b&w $5.95

Tigers of the Terra Vol III #1 (of 4; Ted Nomura) Word War II was not the end of the struggle between the Empire of the Sun and the Empire of the Cross, it was just the beginning. To confront the destiny of the future, World War II would be repeated a century later, this time in outer space. 24pg $2.95

Warrior Nun Areala Vol III #11 (Nathan Lumm & Craig Babiar) Months after the Vatican is destroyed, Sister Shannon Morris is still AWOL. A new Warrior Nun, straight from graduating Silver Cross, is assigned to Sister Shannon's post, New York City. Will she be ready for her first test? 24pg $2.95

Avatar Press

NEW **Avengelyne: Bad Blood** 1 (of 2; Rick Lyon + Matt Haley & Al Rio + Tim Vigil) Avengelyne is thrust into the sordid nightlife of Miami and is assaulted by vampires. For those addicted to blood, nothing sounds sweeter than the purity of the Earth-fallen angel's warm nectar of life. Variant covers. $3.50

NEW **Razor: 'Til I Bleed Daylight** 1 (David Quinn & Mike Wolfer) The recreated Razor promises to push back the boundaries of horror in comics, as the creators dig deep into her violent and disturbing world. An urban hellhole of drugs, sex and black market body-parts provides the backdrop for Razor to redeem innocence wherever she can find it. $3.50
Wraparound cover $3.95

Threshold 30 (Warren Ellis + David Quinn & Jacen Burrows + Dan Parsons) Frank Christchurch brings down the entire house of cards, hanging the consequences. Variant cover. ... $4.95
Two variant nude covers. $6.00

Awesome

NEW **Avengelyne/Suprema: Rage of the Furies** 1 (Liefeld + Stephenson & The Walker Brothers) The Valkyrie has come to claim the soul of one of Awesome's fighting females, and she has enlisted Suprema to do her bidding, pitting her against the avenging angel Avengelyne. $2.99

ONE-SHOT **Coven: The Gathering** (Loeb & Churchill + Rapmund; tpbk) The Coven's powerful origin story is featured in this trade paperback, reprinting the impossible-to-find first five issues of the title. 120pg . $16.99

ONE-SHOT **Fighting American: Rules of the Game** (Jeph Loeb & Ed McGunniess; tpbk) This collection pits Fighting American against a dangerous enemy who puts a price on his head, gathering his formidable rogue's gallery to compete for the reward of killing the star-spangled defender. $12.99

NEW **Glory/Lionheart: Rage of Furies** 1 (Liefeld + Stephenson & Chruchill + Rapmund) Well, much the same as Avengelyne/ Suprema really, only this time Lionheart has been enlisted to battle the Amazing Amazon, Glory. . $2.99

Caliber

Caliber Double Feature 3 (various) This issue features *Tatters*, a new look at urban heroes as the mysterious figure known only as Tatters protects the downtrodden world of the Warrens. 48pg b&w $3.95

Caliber Focus 4 (Kowalski & Chaney + Holtrop) This issue, the world of *The Underside* is featured, with a close-up on all the monsters and evils contained within. 48pg b&w $3.95

ONE-SHOT **Golgothika: Epilogue** (John Bergin) Helmut is a young man who once crossed paths with the world's most powerful leaders. Helmut married the leader of a city's daughter without permission. He uncovered sensitive information, and now he must be punished. His brain is downloaded on to a computer chip, and he is banished to the roughest area of the city. This issue returns to Helmut and ties up all the loose ends of the mini-series. ... $2.95

Sherlock Holmes Reader 4 (various) An abundance of information about the world-famous detective. Comic stories plus magazine-style article and profiles. 48pg $3.95

NEW **Witness to War** 1 (Chuck Bordell) Anna Kreig is a war correspondent attached to the US Third Army during World War II. Her assignment is to find several frontline infantry soldiers and follow their lives to report on what war is actually like. b&w $2.95

ONE-SHOT **Worlds of H.P. Lovecraft Collection** (Steven Jones & Octavio Cariello; hbk) Four issues of the Worlds of H.P. Lovecraft series collected into a single volume. Includes *The Tomb*, *The Alchemist*, *The Lurking Fear* and *Beyond the Wall of Sleep*. 128pg 7" x 10" b&w $14.95

Chaos!

Insane Clown Posse: Pendulum 4 *(Killers in the Mist;* McCann & Beck + Florea) The Wicked Clownz turn the tables on the Stress Team as the elite police hunters become the hunted. Mature readers. $5.95

Purgatori Collected Edition Vol IV (David Quinn & various; tpbk) Collecting Purgatori #7 in which Purgatori becomes angry at Count Dracula's strategic ascent to power amongst ancient vampires. 48pg $5.95

NEW **Vandala** 1 (Kaminski & Brewer + Arnold) *See Close-Up, above.*

Claypool

Elvira 87 (Strom & Smith + Patterson)

Crazed Roderick Hives mistakes Elvira for his late wife – girl group vocalist Morella DeSame – and tries to recreate his lost love using Elly as the host. b&w ... $2.50

Elvira Mistress of the Dark 2: Double Delights (various; tpbk) A selection of Elvira classics from the second year of her Claypool comicbook series. Includes *Phantom of the Soap Opera* and *Children of the Night, what Crummy TV Shows they Make*, in which Dracula is introduced to the Claypool universe. 152pg 7" x10" b&w .. $12.95

Soulsearchers 43 (David & Cockrum + Severin) Muggers have stolen Peterson's magic bag – the one from which anything can emerge – and it's wreaking all sorts of havoc. Not only that, but Kelly has decided that Arnold the transformed prairie dog is lonely, so she buys him a lady rodent for companionship. b&w $2.50

Fantagraphics

Meat Cake 10 (Dame Darcy) Let the Meat Cake series continue! Beatrix explores the underwater palaces of Planet Blue, helps a clan of pirates obtain knighthood, and rockets to a wasp-inhabited hive-world. Mature readers. b&w $3.95

Naughty Bits 32 (Roberta Gregory) Bitchy has just ended the lengthy saga with Chuckie, and is trying to get back on to normal terms. The trouble is, her elderly mother is on the scene and appears to be losing it, and Bitchy is going to have to mother her own mother. Mature readers 24pg b&w $2.95

Nimrod 5 (Lewis Trondheim) This extra-long issue is entitled *Genesisyphus Apocalypso* and summarises the physical, moral and spiritual history of the entire universe. b&w $3.95

Prince Valiant Vol 40 (Hal Foster) Ten years after its beginning, the 40th and final volume of the Prince Valiant reprints is here. It collects stories from 1970-71, beginning with the completion of the rescue mission form the previous volume. 48pg 10" x 14" $16.95

Zero Zero #27 (various) Includes the last chapter of Kim Deitch's *The Search for Smilin' Ed* and some brand new stories penned by Renee French, Chris Ware, Lewis Trondheim and David Mazzucchelli. Mature readers. 64pg b&w $4.95

Image

Astounding Space Thrills: The Comic Book 2 (Steve Conley & Mark Baumann) Someone is killing key figures in the robot underworld and all the clues point to one of their own. Who better to profile a mechanical killer than a computer programmer? $2.95

Big Bang Comics 33 (James Chambers + Christopher Mills & Anthony Bordelon) Even the combined might of the Round Table of America may not be enough when the fate of two worlds hangs in the balance. Spaceman Jon Cosmos has returned to Earth seeking help for his adopted home which has been attacked by Gas Giants from Planet X. b&w $3.95

Blood Legacy 4 (Matt Hawkins + Kerri Hawkins & Mark Pajarillo; *Top Cow)* The secrets of Ryan's past life are revealed. She is confronted by the Others, who now demand retribution for her sins. $2.50

NEW **The Butcher Knight** 1 (Charles Holland & Dwayne Turner; *Top Cow)* This is the story of Luther Washington, a man who is also a monster. A half-demon named Daria set him free from 1700 years of imprisonment and now she holds the key to his revenge plans. $2.50

City of Silence 3 (of 3; Warren Ellis & Gary Erskine) Metal ghost is psychotic, and he has been conspiring to wake up the City of Silence. When the Silencers knock on his door they find that he is not only a murderer but the creator of a computer that can raise Hell. $2.50

ONE-SHOT **The Cow: Summer Edition** (various; *Top Cow)* In celebration of the Witchblade television series this summer's Top Cow one-shot will be dedicated to Sara Pezzini, the Witchblade. Features behind-the-scenes action on the Witchblade set, and a brand new Witchblade story. $2.95

Dark Angel: Phoenix Resurrection 2 (Kia Asamiya) As he travels across Oukoku, our young hero Dark discovers that things are not always what they seem. Leen, the usually hot-headed battler, does not want to do anything hasty, and his cute sidekick Kyo seems to have had a sudden change of heart. Variant cover. $2.95

NEW **Darkchylde/Witchblade** 1 (Randy Queen) *See Close-Up, below.*

Dark Crossings 2 *(Dark Cloud Overhead;* Charles Holland & Dwayne Turner; *Top Cow)* Detective Sara Pezzini's investigation of a murder reveals that the prime suspect is none other than Lara Croft. Meanwhile Daria seeks the scariest monster of them all – The Butcher Knight. 48pg Prestige $5.95

Dark Minds Vol II #0 (Ken Siu-Chong & Omar Dogan) A single well-placed bullet decided the path a young child called Mai would take. This issue concentrates on the origin of this SIA agent. Variant cover. $2.50

The Darkness 33 (Scott Lobdell & Brian Ching; *Top Cow)* Two-part story leading up to a double #35. This story explores The Darkness from a different angle as we get to learn about the past of Jackie's twin sisters Capris and Castagliana. $2.50

A Distant Soil 30 (Colleen Doran) Some will die, and some will wish they had. The shocking story readers have been waiting two decades for has arrived. b&w 40pg $3.95

Echo 0 (Pat Lee + Ken Siu-Chong & Long Vo + Charles Park) At first the Echo team was comprised of six members who were complete strangers to one another except two: Sho and Yuri. This issues explores their past as inseparable partners since childhood. Variant cover. $2.50

E.V.E Protomecha 6 (Aron Lusen + Christian Lichtner & Ale Garza) With the third and final target eliminated, it seems that E.V.E has completed her mission. But it turns out that to truly save that which she has grown to cherish, she must face up to some truths and some daunting adversaries. $2.50

F5 #4 (Tony Daniel) As the web of lies and deceit begins to unravel, F5 learns its true fate. Penny and the rest discover that there is more than one party interested in Kessler's new weapon of mass destruction. $2.50

Geeksville 2 (Rich Koslowski & Gary Sassaman) The three geeks begin the arduous task of getting their first, soon-to-be-self-published comicbook into print. They have the artwork completed, so the rest of it can't be too hard now can it? b&w $2.95

Kin 6 (Gary Frank; *Top Cow)* Bob, Elly and Cloon fight for their lives and the freedom of Bob's KIN as their struggle turns the entire Nevada SIA facility into a war zone. 40pg $3.95

Kiss: Psycho Circus 32 (Brian Holguin & Clayton Crain; *Todd McFarlane Productions)* A true gallery of nature's misfits is presented in this issue. One very peculiar sideshow features girls born without hearts (nothing unusual about that), men that weep blood (or that), and earthbound children born with angel's wings. $2.50

ONE-SHOT **The Messenger** (Jerry Ordway) The tale of a man haunted by his past and able to see into the mind of anyone he touches. This man uses his power to determine the absolute guilt of murderers, delivering justice unencumbered by the criminal system. But what happens when he finds that his gift is not infallible, and he has he blood of innocents on his hands? 48pg $5.95

NEW **Objective Five** #1 (Luke Lizalde & Danny Miki's Crime Lab) Since 1972 every government has denied creating biological weapons. The Center for Disease Control is dedicated to ignoring those claims and infiltrating foreign countries' biological programmes. $2.95

Parts Unknown 2 (Beau Smith & Brad Gorby) The testosterone times of manly manoeuvres are back, where the bad guys are bad, the good guys can wreak vengeance and political incorrectness is something everybody flings about knowing nobody really minds. b&w $2.95

The Red Star 2 (Christian Gossett + Bradley James Kayl & Gossett) The Red Fleet launches a brutal assault on the desert fortress of Kar Dathra's Gate, Holy Land of the Nistaani Warriors. The day is soon won, or so the Fleet thinks. $2.95

Rising Stars 9 (J. Michael Straczynski & Christian Zanier; *Top Cow)* In act one of this series the world shaped the characters. Now in the first part of this new story-arc, the characters are beginning to shape the world, and the world isn't too happy about it. $2.50

Rumble Girls 3 (Lea Hernandez) Raven Tansania Ransom is being aggressively courted by media conglomerate EnteCo to play the part of the sexy Rumble Girl Silky Warrior Tansie. But are presents and promises enough to make her choose fleeting stardom over a future as a legitimate HardSkin pilot? b&w $3.50

Saffire 3 (Sean Ruffner & Mat Broome) The malevolent creatures that normally skulk in the shadows of the Underworld grow bolder and old secrets hint at a violent exodus. Saffire must confront the Lord of the Underworld in a battle that will determine the fate of both the heavens and Earth. $2.95

Sam & Twitch 12 *(Witch Hunter* 3; Brian Michael Bendis & Albert Ponticelli; *Todd McFarlane Productions)* Modern-day witches are being systematically killed. Sam and Twitch enter a world of the black arts, spells and potions to catch the killer as the media spreads rumours of witch hunts and ritual deaths. $2.50

Savage Dragon 77 (Erik Larsen) Wildstar returns! Amidst the ravaged ruins of this Savage New World the Dragon confronts the one man who may have all the answers. But how did he get here? And what happened to the planet the Dragon once called home? Variant cover. $2.95

Section Zero 2 (Karl Kesel & Tom Grummett; *Gorilla)* A startling and deadly discovery reveals important insights into the group's and Doc Challenger's past and sets their course for the future as one teammate falls, and an unexpected ally rises to fill the gap. $2.50

Shock Rockets 4 (of 6; Kurt Busiek & Stuart Immonen) Amid mounting tension and danger in the storyline, this issue takes a break and focuses on how the ShockRockets work, as Alejandro delves into the deepest recesses of the ShockRockets base, learns the origin of the ShockRockets themselves and discovers a technological breakthrough that will have big repercussions. $2.50

NEW **Skinners** 1 (Mat Broome) Another to add to the unusual monopoly Image has on titles beginning with S. This is a new state-of-the-art title which brings special effects and computer generated nurb-based models (a technique used in the movies, you know) to the comicbook medium. This is the first issue in a series delving into a world where man's domestic production has corrupted the Earth. Phen, relentless ruler of a totalitarian empire, is regarded as the salvation of mankind, however an underground group known as Jacob's Gate seek to reveal that he is really the source of human adversity. Variant covers. $2.95

Soul Saga 5 (Stephen Platt + Christian Lichtner & Platt) Aries is horrified at the atrocities he is forced to witness during a brutal campaign of retribution on the frontier. As he struggles to face his inner turmoil he finds himself charged with the capital crime of high treason. $2.50

NEW **Soul Saga Collected Edition** Vol I (Stephen Platt + Christian Lichtner & Platt) Featuring the first two issues of the series, plus never-before-seen sketches and creative notes. 56pg $5.95

Spawn 100 (Todd McFarlane + Brian Holguin & Greg Capullo; *Todd McFarlane Productions)* The first title to reach the ton-up for Image is celebrated with a veritable fireworks display of variant covers (six in total) and plot disaster. As Heaven and Hell stand on the brink of total war with only Spawn between them, something happens. As the tagline goes, *She Dies.* But who is She? This issue has it all: death, birth, revelations and conclusions. $2.50

Spawn: The Dark Ages 17 (Steve Niles & Nat Jones; *Todd McFarlane Productions)* Spawn suffers through the realisation that his powers have been stolen by a band of Druid priests. Now faced with an uncertain future, the Hellspawn must find his way through the world powerless and hunted. $2.50

Tellos 8 (Todd Dezago & Mike Wieringo; *Gorilla)* Well, Tellos has made the leap to Gorilla. Join Jarek, Koj, Serra, Hawke and Rikka as they engage in the epic struggle that will decide the fate of an entire magical world. Variant covers. $2.50

Tomb Raider 7 (Dan Jurgens & Andy Park; *Top Cow)* When Lara wakes up to discover the Eye of Shaherettin in her bedroom, she finds that she is now hunted by the Midnight Squires. $2.50

NEW **Tomb Raider Vol I: The Saga of the Medusa Mask** (Dan Jurgens & Andy Park; *Top Cow;* tpbk) Collecting together the first four issues of the regular series. Gaining possession of the Medusa Mask will allow Lara to get her hands on the one treasure she really wants – her mother's music box. 112pg $12.95

ONE-SHOT **Top Cow Classics: Rising Stars** 1 (J. Michael Straczynski & Keu Cha; *Top Cow)* The return of the baffling black and whites. This month Rising Stars 1 is monochromatically revisited. b&w $2.95

Violent Messiahs 2 (Joshua Dysart & Tone Rodriguez) Cheri has seen Citizen Pain. Like a demon in flames he trapped her and spoke to her. His voice was dark and sizzling, and it said that her life would never be the same again. And so we see. Variant cover. $2.95

The Wicked 7 (Francis Takenaga & Roy Martinez) With a slight departure from the demon stalking of before, this issue promises to be a psychological thriller that delves into the lives and circumstances that brought Nathan and Wendy together. $2.95

image CLOSE-UP

Darkchylde/Witchblade 1

Image Comics

Writer/Artist: Randy Queen

Kenneth Irons is out to make Ariel Chylde an offer she cannot refuse, relinquishing her curse forever so that she can live the normal life of a teenager. But it isn't long before Ariel's reckless choices lead her directly into the path of the Witchblade. $2.50

ON SALE JULY

Witchblade 42 (Paul Jenkins & Keu Cha; *Top Cow*) Sara Pezzini is beginning to wonder if she really is in control of the Witchblade. And what are all these PEZ dispensers doing everywhere? ... $2.50

Insight Studios

Liberty Meadows 12 (Frank Cho) One of the favourite Liberty Meadows characters dies. But worry not, it is promised that you will laugh until you cry. In the aftermath of the fire, Brandy, Frank and the critters find out what it means to be living together b&w $2.95

Oni Press

The Blair Witch Chronicles 4 (of 4; Jen Van Meter & Bernie Mireault) In the 1800s new settlers moved into the abandoned Blair Township to build a new community, Burkittsville. Every attempt to build on the site of the old Blair Witch church, however, is met with cataclysmic demise. Watch the minister try and do something about it. Mature readers. b&w $2.95

ONE-SHOT **Fortune & Glory: A True Hollywood Comic Book Story** (Brian Michael Bendis; tpbk) *See Close-Up, right.*

Soulwind III: The Infamous Transit Vagrants (Scott Morse) It's time for Nick to head back to Earth, and a bizarre group of men who are taking technology to its limits might be his best bet. The problem is interstellar espionage reaches a new level when a stowaway aboard their ship sets his sights on Soulwind, the legendary sword of which Nick has taken possession. Mature readers. 7" x 10" 96pg b&w $8.50

ONE-SHOT **Stupid Comics** (Jim Mahfood) Collecting for the first time the strip from Arizona's Java newspaper. Social observation and comedic skewing on a wide range of topics. Mature readers. b&w $2.95

Sirius

Akiko 40 (Mark Crilley) Marking a return to sci-fi storytelling on an epic scale. This adventure begins when Spuckler learns of his home planet being acquired by the Gothtek corporation, which is in the process of demolishing every structure on the planet's surface in order to turn it into an enormous intergalactic car park. Bimonthly. 24pg b&w $2.95

NEW **Artesia Afield** 1 (Mark Smylie) Here begins the second chapter in the epic tale of the warrior witch queen. The war against the Thessid Empire has begun in the Middle Kingdoms, and Artesia has placed her company at the heart of it. Mature readers. $2.95

Poe 24 (Jason Asala) Edgar and company come face to face with the fifth of 12 demons, who have been with them all along. Plus the sixth instalment of *Fire & Ice*, where Mad Meg meets an old ally. 24pg b&w $2.95

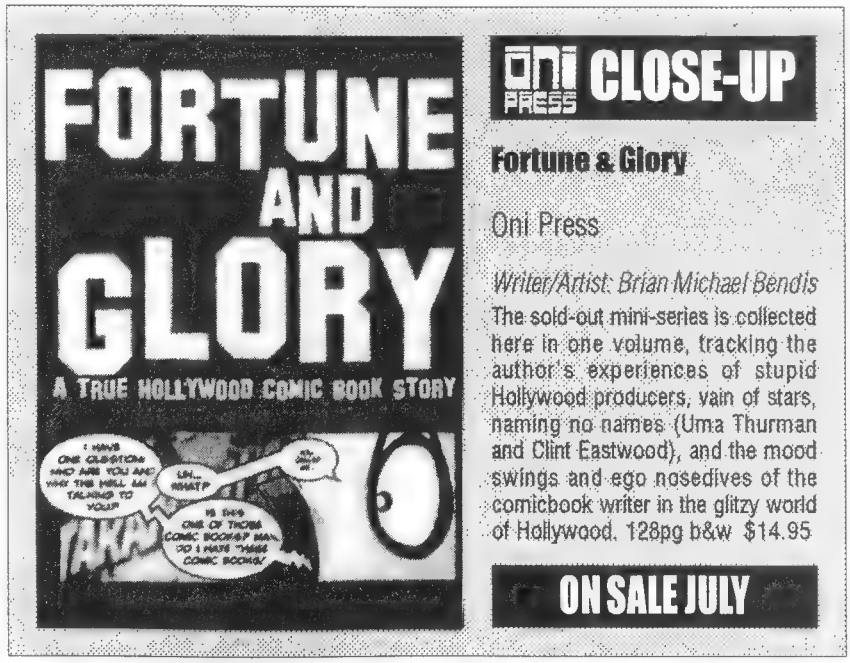
Poison Elves 59 (Drew Hayes) Lusiphur, Jace and Cleah seek to steal back the Elvin Fire they once so disastrously returned. But they are going to have to do it without killing anyone. 24pg b&w $2.95

Tokyopop.com

Cardcaptor Sakura 8 (various) Everyone is excited when a new student named Li transfers to Sakura's school. But Li has a secret life—he is on the hunt for Clow Cards. 48pg b&w $2.95

Gundam Wing 6 (various) Can the warfare end? While OZ meets in Los Angeles to discuss a possible truce with the colonists, rebel units attack the meeting. The ambush leads to an all-out attack, and the war continues. 48pg b&w $2.95

Sailor Moon 22 (various) Strange things are afoot at Infinity College. Weird happenings, mysterious sightings, rumours that it is a training school for sorcerors, which is of course a ludicrous suggestion. 48pg b&w $2.95


FORTUNE AND GLORY
A TRUE HOLLYWOOD COMIC BOOK STORY
TAKA!
ONI PRESS CLOSE-UP
Fortune & Glory
Oni Press
Writer/Artist: Brian Michael Bendis
The sold-out mini-series is collected here in one volume, tracking the author's experiences of stupid Hollywood producers, vain of stars, naming no names (Uma Thurman and Clint Eastwood), and the mood swings and ego nosedives of the comicbook writer in the glitzy world of Hollywood. 128pg b&w $14.95
ON SALE JULY

Viz

Aqua Knight 4 (of 6; Yukito Kishiro) Ruliya and Arrabarus's battle is interrupted by the arrival of the colossal Zyfort, bringing a group of colonists to Lighthouse Island. 40pg b&w ... $3.50

ONE-SHOT **The Art of Pokémon the Movie 2000** (various) Lavish storybook dedicated to the Pokémon theatrical release, and made up of cels from the movie. 64pg $9.95

Dragon Ball Part 3 #2 (of 14; Akira Toriyama) Goku's aeroplane crash-lands in the frozen north where he is rescued by the kindly people of Jingle Village. Soon he finds they have a common enemy. b&w $2.95

Dragon Ball Z Part 3 #6 (of 10; Akira Toriyama) Dr Briefs shows Goku his newly invented rocket ship that will send him to Namek in six days the No-Frills way. b&w $2.95

Eagle Vol VI *(The King of New York;* Kaji Kawaguchi) As the New York primaries approach, candidate Ken Yamaoka tries to get the endorsement of Gilbert Blackburn, the mayor of New York and political power broker. b&w $6.95

Inu-Yasha Part V #2 (of 11; Rumiko Takahashi) Inu-Yasha abandons the other travellers and heads into the unknown. Somewhere in the green forest depths waits Kagome's undead doppelgänger, Kikyo, now accompanied by a host of spectral eels. 40pg b&w $2.95

Magical Pokémon Journey Part 2 #1 (of 4; Yumi Tsukirino) Hazel is in love with Pokémon trainer Almond, and her easy-going nature wins more Pokémon friends than his catch-'em-all attitude. A good lesson for the fighting kids in the playground, that. 40pg b&w $4.95

No Need For Tenchi! Part 9 #5 (of 6; Hitoshi Okuda) With Ayeka as his bargaining chip, Yataka has a few well chosen words with Tenchi and Co to negociate for the prisoner he really wants... Ryoko. But some people are more dangerous to have as hostages than enemies. b&w $2.95

No Need For Tenchi! Vol VIII *(Chef of Iron;* Hitoshi Okuda; tpbk) Collecting together Part 8 of the monthly series. When Tenchi starts behaving strangely it is time to engage a little help from the covert surveillance team of Washu, Inc. 184pg b&w $15.95

Pokémon Adventures Part 2 #6 (of 6; Hidenori Kusaka & MATO) Red finally makes it to Cinnabar Island, but once again Team Rocket has made it there before him. b&w $2.95

ONE-SHOT **Pokémon: The First Movie Animation Comics** (various; tpbk) Collecting together all four issues of *Mewtwo Strikes Back* plus the one-shot *Pikachu's Vacation*. 208pg $15.95

NEW **Pokémon the Movie 2000: Pikachu's Rescue Adventures** 1 (various) While the rest of the Pokémon are having a summer nap, Togepi wanders off and gets lost, and Pikcahu and Elekid must find their friend somewhere in the branches of a giant tree. 48pg $3.95

NEW **Pokémon the Movie 2000 – Revelation: Lugia** 1 (various) A mysterious flying fortress is travelling across the land. Its only preoccupation seems to be capturing all the legendary bird Pokémon. 48pg $3.95

Pulp Vol IV #8 (various) Violence, sex, and general adult-themed manga, plus features and editorial criticism. Mature readers. 184pg b&w $5.95

Ranma ½ Part IX #3 (of 11; Rumiko Takahashi) Ukyo is staying at Ranma's house to atone for making such a bad okonomiyaki sauce, and she is getting stoked up to cook again. Can Ranma stand the guilt of the knowledge that he was the one to ruin the original sauce in its 10-year cooking period, or will he have to own up? b&w $2.95

Silent Möbius: Catastrophe 2 (of 6; Kia Asamiya) A mysterious cyborg killer is slashing its way through Tokyo again, and this time it is not just a mindless murderer like the last one. What is worse it has found its maker underneath the careful surface of civil life. 40pg b&w $2.95

Video Girl AI Vol II: Mix Down (Masakazu Katsura; tpbk) A real-life video girl is dedicated to getting high school student Yota Moteuchi a date. But will she succeed before being recalled to the video world by the evil Controller? Collecting all the stories featured in Animerica Extra Vol II #8 to Vol III #4. 192pb b&w $15.95

INTERNATIONAL

Black Library (UK)

ONE-SHOT **Darkblade** (various; graphic novel) The original adventures of the doomed Dark Elf, Malus Darkblade, are here collected into one volume. Darkblade falls foul of the evil soul-stealing dæmon, Tz'arkan, while raiding a long-lost ancient Temple. 48pg b&w $6.95

Inferno 19 (various) Bimonthly anthology of all-action science fiction and fantasy short stories, fantastic artwork and comic strips from the world of Warhammer and the nightmarish future of Warhammer 40K. 68pg b&w $6.95

Warhammer Monthly 32 (various) Features the return of the dæmon-slaying Sister of Battle, Ephræl Stern, in Book 2 of the stunning *Dæmonifuge*. Meanwhile, Leonatos and the Exiles must battle against Tzeentch's chosen champion, Hæroth the Fallen, to win the Blade Encarmine in *Bloodquest*. 44pg b&w $2.95

Eddie Campbell Comics (Aus)

Eddie Campbell's Bacchus 53 (Eddie Campbell) It is nonsensical, profound, and, well, it's just *life*. Bacchus comes back to us with an extra pinch of *je ne c'est quoi*. Mature readers. b&w $2.95

UK NEWSSTAND

DC Thomson

The Beano 3031-3035 (weekly; various) Another issue of the 3000-issue-and-counting humour comic anthology, featuring firm old favourites such as Roger the Dodger, Billy Whizz, The Bash Street Kids, Dennis the Menace and Gnasher among others. 24pg £0.50

Beano Superstars 103 (various) One complete strip of the long-running humour anthology is contained in each issue. 36pg £0.65

Bunty 2127-2231 (wkly; various) Comics, features and photo strips in the long-running comic. £0.65

Classics from the Comics 56 (various) Anthology collection reprinting classic cartoon strips from DC Thomson's old favourite mainstays The Beano and The Dandy. 68pg b&w £1.20

Commando Action and Adventure Stories 3352-3360 (8 per month; digest; various) One self-contained strip per issue. Some new material. 68pg b&w £0.60

The Dandy 3062-3066 (wkly; various) Humour strips from DC Thompson's longest-running comic, still starring Desperate Dan and Korky the Cat. 24pg £0.60

Football Picture Story Monthly 342-343 (fortnightly; digest; various) Contains one full-length self-contained football story per issue. 68pg b&w £0.60

Fun-Size Beano 101-102 (fortnightly; various) Pocket-sized spin-off from the Beano featuring Dennis the Menace, Gnahser, the Bash Street Kids and all the usual suspects. 68pg £0.60

Fun-Size Dandy 99-100 (fortnightly; various) Pocket-sized spin-off from The Dandy featuring Desperate Dan. 68pg £0.60

Egmont Fleetway

2000AD 1200-1203 (weekly; various) A new look for the summer sees this title get lean and mean. Mikolai Dante returns in Book II of *Tsar Wars* and Judge Dredd battle sky-surfing saboteurs in *SABS*. 32pg £1.25

Judge Dredd Megazine 68 (various) Judge Dredd delves into deep space in Part 5 of *Dead Ringer*, a star-spanning saga written by John Wagner. Plus, a new one-off thriller with some of Dredd's best supporting characters. 48pg £4.99

Panini Comics

Action Man 49 (4-weekly; various) All-new action-packed soldier adventure yarns based on the best-selling action figure. 28pg £1.45

Doctor Who Magazine 294 (4-weekly; various) Contains feature articles on everybody's favourite misfit, in addition to an original *Doctor Who* comic strip. 52pg £3.25

Sindy 2 (various) Comic strips, puzzles and colouring features based on the UK's preferable alternative to Barbie. Includes gift. £1.35

Spectacular Spider-Man 63 (4-weekly; various) All new comic strips, puzzles and games. 72pg £2.50

Wickid 4 (4-weekly; various) All-new licensed Fox Kids comic featuring the Addams Family, Ninja Turtles, Power Rangers and Spider-Man. 36pg £1.60

Wolverine Unleashed 50 (4-weekly; various) Compiles old and new Marvel US Wolverine comic strips plus magazine-style feature articles. 72pg £2.25

NETWORKS

A round-up of comics news, reviews and gossip posted on the Internet. Compiled by Phil Hall and the CI team of NETMites.

SEEN ON THE NET

Swamp tripe!

DESPITE the Superheronews mailing list banning open comics discussion (redirecting it to the new Superheronews Chat group) this didn't stop Christopher Riley *(Tapmonkey@cs.com)* from firing off a response to a DC press release written up by *Mania.com*'s news service, Newsarama: "Up-and-coming writer Brian (**Swamp Thing**) Vaughan checked in with Mania's Newsarama for some comments on August's fifth week event that he's spearheading for DC, **Green Lantern: Ring of Fire.**"

*Judging from Vaughan's abominable debut (this had to be his first comic) I'll be happy to save money by not buying his **Ring of Fire.** His writing was so awful. I haven't spoken to a single person who found anything remotely passable in the new **Swamp Thing**. Everyone I spoke to who purchased the first issue has no plans on buying the second issue.*

*I'm blaming the artist also. He should buy **How to Draw Comics the Marvel Way**. If nothing else, he'd learn perspective.*

And I thought Vertigo couldn't possibly disappoint me any more than it already had. Vertigo did at least have the decency to put out that colour preview, so my retailer knew to order real low on the book.

*This is worse than **Doom Patrol**, after Morrison left the book. How does such a mess get the green light? Hopefully they'll bring back the real Swamp Thing (maybe not at Vertigo) and find a competent creative team.*

Whew! Let's hope critic Riley and writer Vaughan never meet at a convention. Oh, and it wasn't his first comics writing.

Unusual Pokemon?

WHILE running a search on **Pokemon,** one of our team discovered the very European *de.alt.fan.sputnik*.

While mostly frequented by Germans, much of this Usenet group is translated for English speaking members.

Jakspit@blinken.de asked this somewhat rhetorical question: *There are different types of Pokemon. Rock Pokemon, Water Pokemon, etc. But just what is a Grass Pokemon? A cute little monster that sits around smoking weed all day and telling Ash he can't be bothered to go to the Pokemon arena, perhaps?*

This prompted a response from Ulf Karsten *(UNK@desteig.org.ve)* which could cost us our family audience... He invented his own new-style adults-only **Pokemon**, with the tag-line (loosely translated): *Got to shag 'em all!*

To cancel a tradition

THE NEWS that **Aquaman** is being cancelled – for the fifth time – prompted the Superheronews Chat moderator Rik Offenberg *(superhero news@aol.com)* to offer up these questions:

*Right now DC is planning on cancelling **Aquaman** and restarting **Hawkman**. Now both have had quite a few series over the years. So...*
1) Should DC try and find someone who loves the character and try to reinvigorate him instead of cancellation? Or...
2) Should DC stop trying to restart comics with characters that have had limited appeal historically, like Aquaman, Hawkman, etc?

Personally I don't see the point of stopping and restarting the same heroes over and over again. Both Aquaman and Hawkman have been around since the '40s! You would think DC would be able to have the vision to figure out what to do with these characters, or at least be able to find someone who does.

*As things stand, I just assume that two years from now they will cancel this **Hawkman** and be restarting yet another **Aquaman** series.*

Andrew Smith *(capncomics@aol.com)* gave a measured response and opted for a very retro suggestion: *In regard to the characters that have been described in this discussion as ones with loyal fan bases but aren't strong enough to carry an ongoing title: I think the solution – albeit one that doesn't seem likely to happen – is the obvious one: Comics should return to a modified version of the Golden Age format.*

Marvel and DC should cut their lines in half, and triple the page count of the remainder. A comic magazine with 68 editorial pages (plus outside advertising) with 40 or so pages of new content and the remainder reprint would probably retail for $3 to $4. Perhaps less if offset by including national magazine advertising.

*This would have the following benefits: Room for backup characters. Imagine just two Superman comics a month: **Superman**, combining three of the four existing titles into one monthly, and **Action Comics** with the fourth Superman story, plus two ten-pagers featuring Aquaman and Hawkman, plus a reprint of some other marginal character (Atom? Metal Men?).*

*It would cost the reader less than buying four **Superman** books and **Aquaman**!*

Distribution profit margins would be enormous – enough to return comics to the newsstands, grocery stores, pharmacies and dentists' office waiting rooms.

Kids would be exposed to comics in their daily lives as commonplace, creating foot traffic for Direct Sales outlets (which are destination stores). Ultimately leading to:

Comics would have a shot at being a mainstream medium again instead of a niche industry!

Devil's advocate

DESPITE a general agreement from many people about Andrew Smith's idea, Ariel Sudilovsky *(asudilovsky @calfee.com)* saw problems in what was essentially a novel idea: *Ain't Marvel dipping its toes into waters like these with its **100 Page Monsters**.*

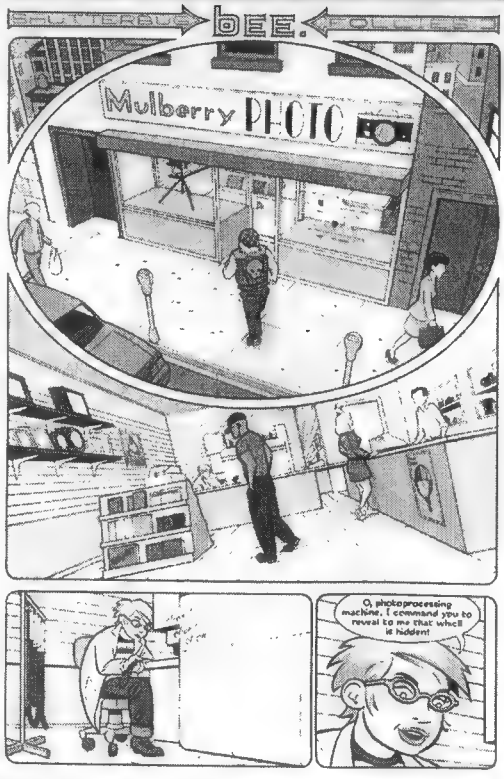
I do like them, and don't have a huge problem with the $2.99 price tag. The down side (there always has to be one, no?) is that the paper quality and, therefore by proxy, the colour were not to my tastes.

The fear is that if this format you suggest were to be adopted, and the quality issues stated above addressed, eventually (once the format was firmly established) someone would realise that they could cut the quality and keep the price, and boom, we're right back where we started.

An example of the mind-set that would result in the realisation of the fear is what happened a short time ago when Marvel raised its cover price to $1.99.

It added the incentive of a front gatefold cover, ads on the outside, plus story so far and character material on the inside for new

COMICS ON THE NET: BEE – SHUTTERBUG FOLLIES



BEE is a new cartoon strip for alternative weekly newspapers. A serialised narrative, the strip's creator Jason Little describes it optimistically it as "Bubble gum noir. An approach that will bring readers back week after week to watch the action unfold".

The first adventure, *Shutterbug Follies*, introduces the exploits of the plucky heroine Bee. She works as a photo-finishing technician at Mulberry Photo, where all manner of creeps, criminals and cranks bring her their film for processing.

But Bee's habit of duplicating titillating photos for her own collection takes a grim turn for the worse when corpses start popping up in the pictures. Her curiosity soon gets the better of her and she finds herself shadowing a mysterious foreign photographer into a diabolical trap.

A native New Yorker, Jason Little has been drawing cartoons since he was a child. In addition to *Shutterbug Follies* (**Bee** volume one), he has also written and illustrated the Xeric award winning **Jack's Luck Runs Out** and a number of short works for various cartoon literary journals.

Little's web site is at: *www.beecomix.com*, where a substantial and impressive **Bee** sampler is on view, with a very quick download time. There are also links to his previous works. Little can be e-mailed at *littlejason @mindspring.com*

Visit the Comics International official website at www.comics-international.com with links to all the top publishers' sites and to all the major worldwide comics creators' webpages

CI Message Board

http://www.onelist.com/community/comics_international

CI continues to take over the Internet! With its own website (www.comics-international.com), *a dedicated forum on CompuServe and the* **CI** *discussion community* (http://www.onelist.com/community/comics_international)*which offers the opportunity for free, fast and lively comics-related debate, it's almost an extension of* **Comics International** *itself!*

The group has a massive 9000 messages on our board with topics covering comics and anything else our group wishes to debate. But for the benefit of readers not on the Internet, or those already screen-shocked enough, here is a selection of the best of this month's topics...

Short-termism?

HOT on the heels of a discussion about whether some creators abuse their positions in the industry by failing to deliver more than the odd cover for someone else's book was a direct attack on J. Scott Campbell of ***Danger Girl*** *and Joe Madureira of* ***Battle Chasers****, for blatantly doing just that.*

RICH JOHNSTON *(twisting@hotmail.com) defended the main culprits:* Creators are free to do as they wish and buyers *[the publishers]* are too. If a creator wants to build a career by putting out quality product on a monthly basis, or blow it on a short term boom, sell the film rights and retire in a beach house, that's up to them too.

PHIL HALL *(squonk_uk@yahoo.com) responded:* Rationally, I can't argue with you. Personally I think I'd possibly do the same thing could I draw. Altruistically and for the long-term sake of the industry I think this stinks to buggery.

Film rights get sold like maggots from a fishing tackle shop. If Hollywood wants to throw money around for an idea that has a minimal chance of being made into a film then fine, there's a lot of money floating around Hollywood. The books by the likes of Campbell and Madureira have a concentrated yet revolving audience: Most will stick with comics for a while and then move on, few will progress onto books like **X-Men**, **Spawn**, **JLA**, etc, and some of them will get the indie bug.

The demographics I was shown in 1996 said this and they forecast audiences would continue to drop. They also acknowledged while hardened comic fans were the vocal minority, the money came from the silent mass majority. The forecast was for the gap between them to shrink and it certainly is shrinking.

What Campbell and Madureira have done is allegorically a bit like shoplifting. They've stolen fans from other books, let them down and the loser is everyone but the Campbells and Madureiras.

What they do is far worse than a group of creators setting up a company like Gorilla, at least these guys will deliver what's expected of them and will believe they are doing it for the good of the industry, unaware of the consequences it will have further down the food chain.

Blade and blue cheese

PAUL ANNIS *(pannis@armature.com) commented on how Marvel fails in the movie stakes, while DC has far more success:* Marvel has had only a string of flops at least until *Blade*, which I gather was something of a success.

SARAH LITTLEHALES *(sarah@rocketworks.dabsol.co.uk) agreed:* What is it about *Blade?* I thought it was a great movie, but as for the comic – it totally sucks! The so-called ongoing series was so bad they've axed it down to a six issue limited series!

By the way, does anyone know why Marvel believes silver harms vampires? This was a theme that was carried into the *Blade* film, and I've noticed it since in all their vampire comics.

JOHN PARKINSON *(jp@destiny.org.uk) quipped:* That's because it's the Marvel Universe and its vampires can be vulnerable to blue cheese if Marvel wants them to be.

Backlash on price hike

MATT SOMMER *(sommermatt@aol.com) was incensed by the news of Marvel's cover prices rising again:* I was flipping through the **Previews** catalogue for March (comics set to ship in May 2000) and I was blind-sided by the fact Marvel has raised the cover price on all of its standard books to $2.25!

Good God, but this is just ridiculous... I suppose it all goes back to simple economics, where the smaller number of buyers pays more for the same product. But still, I've seen comics go from 40 cents up to $2.25 in just my comic collecting lifetime. I just can't help but feel this is another nail in the coffin of the comics industry. And it also just upsets me that Marvel feels it can just charge what it wants and the fanboys will keep paying it, ad infinitum.

Not that I buy many Marvel comics any more, but here's another reason for me to not buy any. I mean, how can they justify this when most alternative comics, producing maybe 2000-3000 copies, still charge $2.95?

I don't mean to sound like a nostalgic pensioner complaining about the price of a Mars bar or something, *readers. Marvel said that it had to raise the price to do this and the additional ads on the outside of the gatefold would help alleviate the cost concerns. Shortly thereafter it got rid of the gatefold story content, replaced it with ads, and never commented on the fact that its initial comments had been at best poorly thought out and at worst base lies.*

Then the gatefold covers disappeared completely and the price remained the same for a short while. Then, boom, up go the prices. Everyone forgot what it had claimed earlier.

Of course there will be no backlash from fans. There never is!

Quality of paper

ON the Comics_discussion group George Varani *(george-lisa-varani@juno.com)* wrote: *For the record, I just want to cast my vote for quality paper. All of the Image books I bought when they first came out still look great, as good as the day I bought them.* ***Brigade***, ***Shadowhawk***, ***Youngblood***, ***Supreme*** *and* ***WildCats*** *all look awesome.*

Too bad the art looks dated and the stories don't hold up over time. So I will gladly pay the extra 50 cents to $1.00 for the better paper.

Former DC director of production Bob Rozakis *(Bobro32@aol.com)* was on hand with some interesting facts: *The Baxter paper and its successor variations (which have been dubbed "ReBax") are supposed to last 400 years without showing signs of age.*

I'm sure someone at DC and Marvel will be sitting around in the year 2385 to field any complaints.

Nick Theopolis *(SpeedyG875@aol.com)* obviously had a bad day and found reason to take umbrage at this, despite Bob Rozakis's response obviously being humourous: *This has got to be one of the less intelligent comments that I've heard. I can almost see the headlines now. "Old guy sits on crapper awaiting signs of comic deterioration."*

Woohoo! Let's see: Day one "no sign of deterioration"; Day two "no sign of deterioration still"; Day 146,100 "first signs of deterioration in comicbook, Oh, my God! NO!" Who cares anyway? If it lasts, it lasts.

If it doesn't, none of us are going to be around to see the difference anyway. We'll either be a pile of ashes or six feet under.

To which Steve Lightle *(lancer180@aol.com)* had to throw in: *Except for those of us who had the good sense to have ourselves double polybagged for freshness.*

And of course a backing board to prevent ourselves from curling up at the edges!

A use for old comics

A DISCUSSION on how best to dispose of unwanted and worthless comics started on the Superhero-news chat group.

Love In Tights co-creator Clayton Moore *(catspaw1@aol.com)* asked: *What is the best way to unload unwanted books to maximise cash return and do it quickly?*

There were many worthy replies such as giving them away to hospitals or charities, thus getting spiritual repayment. But the one that caused the biggest laugh came from **Captain Marvel**'s Peter David *(padguy@aol.com): Bundle them up as tightly as possible, go into a 7-11, use them to bludgeon the cashier into unconsciousness and empty the register.*

Where the industry fails

RECENTLY on the ORCA discussion group *(orca@egroups.com)*, the most topical discussion concerned the general public's perception of comics and why the industry fails to attract new and young readers.

Matthew Allen Manley *(matman42@prodigy.net)* gave a measured response to the issue at hand: *There are a lot of problems with comics today. You can't just tack it down to one. Price is certainly a factor. A mother can't pick up several comics for a little change to keep her child busy while they're in the store today.*

It's cheaper to pick up a toy or something else to keep him happy. There aren't any real kids' comics on the stands like there used to be.

Public perception is also a large problem with comics (in America at least). Most Americans suffer from a serious deficiency of independent

INTERNET COMICS AND WEBSITE REVIEWS

Combat Colin *www.homeusers.prestel.co.uk/primus/combatcolin.htm*

Fan site devoted to Lew Stringer's fondly remembered character from the lamented Marvel weeklies. There's the first CC from **Action Force Weekly** #5 right through to the 1997 return in the **Summer Special**. The more recent return of Colin and sidekick Semi Automatic Steve could be seen in **Transforce 2000 Magazine** available at Bristol's Comics 2000 with more to follow. Other work by Stringer is of course highlighted including a link to probably the only Swedish website you could safely leave in your registers for that inquisitive PC World technician to find. (DML) **7**

Fevertown *www.fevertown.com*

What I find most appealing about this is not the site itself, the layouts, the writing, or the artwork, but the perspectives within the panels. I'm not just talking about the creator's view on life here – although that is interesting in itself – but rather the unique way in which he views mundane situations. Artist Fever is playing with the medium here, he could be the Alfred Hitchcock of comics, and is certainly treading on the coat tails of Will Eisner. A little bit of professional polish is needed on the artwork maybe, but he has the scope and the vision to take this medium of ours another badly-needed step into the future. Recommended. (DCJ) **8**

thought and comics isn't the only art form to suffer.

If you tell someone you read a great novel, they may (or more likely may not) be interested, but if you tell them you read a great short story, they will likely look at you like you're crazy.

Most Americans let the media tell them what's cool. That is where trends come from. One advantage that comics have is that anyone with talent can put together a comic. There are a lot of great independent comics out there (among a lot more crap). But Marvel seems content to leave its head in its rear and continually dish out dreck.

I'm not saying that there aren't talented people working there who still manage to put out great comics despite the heavy-handed editors. But all of these end of the world, slugfest crossovers – many of them poorly conceived and thought out... Sometimes a half dozen or more writers work on a crossover story that just doesn't hold together. Fans who want the whole story are then forced to buy up to ten books they normally wouldn't have bought just to find out what happens.

I don't know about the rest of you, but I refuse to spend my comic budget on X-books, Spider-Man, WildStorm or any Marvel or DC franchise.

Looking at the rest... Image is still mostly flash, although there have been exceptions: ***Kabuki***, ***Soulwind*** *and much of Valentino's failed non-line were superb.*

DC continually puts out some of the best comics in the industry. Although they have plenty of that same old crap everyone else is serving, they continue to push the envelope out.

But where comics actually work is the independents. Rob Horan gives creators a free reign with his Sirius Entertainment line. Paul Grist's ***Kane*** *is a fantastic book (from Britain!);* ***Kurt Busiek's Astro City***, ***Thieves and Kings***, ***Bone***, *etc. That is where comics really shine.*

Unfortunately you have to get the media behind you if you want to build the popularity of an art form.

With the exception of Kevin Smith, very few celebrities are willing to put their reputation on the line as a lover of comicbooks. Meanwhile, the bulk of us buy comics from the safety of our comic shops, too embarassed to pick one up at the grocery store for fear that someone will see us.

Beanotown.com is here!

ULTRA-conservative publisher DC Thomson is embracing the 21st Century as **The Beano** goes online!

A new Internet community is being created as a virtual home for the likes of Dennis and Gnasher, the Bash Street Kids, Minnie the Minx and Roger the Dodger.

According a spokesperson for the company behind the new **Beano** website, Kirsten Smith-Symms of Vision PR: *www.Beanotown.com will offer an online environment for today's young surfers and will be going live on 15 July, 2000. Visitors to the site will enjoy a highly interactive and typically* ***Beano*** *experience.*

Built as a virtual town, Beanotown .com will offer web buddies an idyllic site where the atmosphere is bright and cheery; slightly chaotic and very ***Beano****! Beanotown is a place that has grown in the background of* ***The Beano****'s stories that, through the use of the web, is being brought into the spotlight.*

Beano *characters will be the populace, along with* ***Beano*** *fans who can buy and customise their own house* [for a charge of £5] *to become Beanotown residents themselves.*

As well as owning their own house in Beanotown suburbs, residents will enjoy other privileges such as their own character image and full participation in relevant features of Beanotown.

The site's homepage – the Town Square – will act as the gateway to a range of destinations initially including Bash Street School, the Town Hall, the Market Place, Surburbia and High Street Shops with daily updated ***Beano*** *characters acting as tour guides!*

The Beanotown museum will offer information on ***The Beano*** *and* ***The Dandy*** *history hosted by* ***The Beano****'s resident time traveller, Tim.*

Mums: Lock up your computers! It sounds like kids and dads have just found a new passtime.

by Robert Cave (RC) David Johnson (DCJ) and David McLintock (DML)

Oh, the Humanity! *www.ohthehumanity.com*

One of the premiere worst movie offerings on the net, with hundreds of awful celluloid atrocities listed under the headings of New, Pick, Awful or Laughable. Each cinematic disaster is reviewed for its badness, parody value, sex (!?) and "things to look out for" (ie. the really cheesy bits). Yes, *The Punisher* and *Howard the Duck* are both there along with other superhero embarrassments... Almost all Marvel inspired. *The Star Wars Holiday Special* scored a spectacular "10" for badness. Surely a recount is demanded for this travesty! (DML) 8

Stray Bullets *http://www.straybullets.com/*

The official website of David Lapham's excellent comic **Stray Bullets** is still undergoing some construction. The slow loading time of some images does detract from the site's elegant design, and the lack of regular updates can be a little annoying. But there is one thing that makes the whole site worthwhile: An online copy of **Stray Bullets II** that serves as both a riveting read and an excellent jumping-on point to one of today's best indie comicbooks. This site may be disappointing in places – as Lampham says himself "the comic comes first". But, as you can see from the site's visuals, the comic is well worth it. (RC) 7

CI Message Board

http://www.onelist.com/community/comics_international

but I mean, really! At a time when the industry seemed to be pulling away from potential collapse, I don't think this bodes well at all...

IAN MUIR *(ian.muir@zoom.co.uk) threw another possibility in the air:* How many months before DC does the same? One? Two? Damn those paper mills and their inflated prices!

MATT SOMMER *came back with:* Well, DC is a special case, its pricing is all over the place anyway. Some books are this price, other books are that price, Vertigo is a different price yet a few of its main core titles are still at $1.99, and I'm sure once it sees what Marvel is doing, it'll raise their rates as well.

And I'm hoping you were being sarcastic about the paper mills being to blame... That has got to be one of the lamest scapegoats that was used back in the '90s for why they had to raise prices across the board!

I don't know the actual costs involved, but if magazines and newspapers could keep basically the same price during these same years, it seems like the comic industry might have been exaggerating just a tad.

Bah. I wonder why I should even care. After reading the concentrated pomposity and cynicism of **The Comics Journal** today, I'm feeling in a dark mood about the entire industry (Fantagraphics included). But yet I do still care. I don't want to see the industry die in my lifetime...

CHRIS SPICER *(mr.dog@free4all.co.uk) too was in almost vehement agreement:* Yeah, I read about this. This is Marvel's last-ditch attempt at alienating what few fans it has left by punishing them for wanting to read Marvel comics.

It's a really stupid idea. Marvel is just not looking at the long term, and I mean that in the most literal sense. It can't really expect this to help its cause overall, can it? For the long term, it should think about attracting new readers by dropping prices and publishing better stories.

Nobody's going to think "Wow, Marvel is putting its prices up, I must buy their comics." This is the worst thing ever.

MIKE KIDSON *(mike@kidson.u-net.com) added an historical slant:* Much the same was said when DC and Marvel prices jumped from 12c to 35c (via a lot of complicated raises and reductions) between about 1970 and 1974. 300 percent is one heck of a price rise, and it got talk about the imminent death of the industry going...

I wonder whether the market for DC and Marvel books isn't by now whittled down to the hardcore fanatics who are going to keep on buying as long as they're published. In which case such comparatively small price increases just aren't going to make any difference.

Marketing comics

PAUL STILES *(paulastiles@hotmail .com) wrote regarding comics companies' failure to successfully promote themselves outside of the industry. He concluded that, while people can try and use independent comics as a way of attracting new readers:* ...they actually represent only a tiny fraction of overall sales and finding ways to broaden comics' appeal and sell more to new markets is something every comic producer is guilty of failing to do.

STUART HOWDEN *(stuart.howden @proiv.com) used his marketing background to further illustrate the point:* I have to say I agree totally here. Working in marketing, I recently had to do a presentation for generating more sales per month for a particular magazine publisher.

The plans I presented were all about bringing new readers with different lifestyles to current readers and broadening readership with these new customers rather than trying to re-invent the wheel with current readers.

I won't bore anyone with the details but I feel this is the way comics should be going to increase the overall readership and sales. Rather than: "Hmm, sales are doing badly, we need new readers. How can we generate more interest? We've really made a mess of all the main current characters. Hey, let's just have a **Crisis/Zero Hour** and start all over, retelling the same stories again"

New readers need to be introduced to current titles, and even the most tenuous links will do for a start. It strikes me that the comics industry should aim at more readers outside the comic/fantasy/SF sectors.

More continuity Crises

ANTHONY PHILLIPS *(aphillips@anote.com) wrote regarding company reboots:* Why, if you have lame or crap characters, don't you kill them off and replace the guy inside the costume with someone new?

With the exception of really iconic characters such as Batman and Superman where Clark Kent and Bruce Wayne are probably more lucrative marketables than say Azrael or Nightwing, most people on the street wouldn't know a Steve Rogers or a Tony Stark from a hole in the ground.

Every comic that has been continuity fixing in recent years has had **Crisis** held up to it. Re-inventing universes isn't a new idea any more.

...and that barely scratches the surface of the debates. Got a computer? Join up and join in the fun!

CI Message Board Extra

URL: www.onelist.com/community/comics_international
E-mail: comics_international@onelist.com

Do you have any favourite comics scenes? Sequences or single frames which have stuck in your head? Such a topic was introduced on the ***CI*** *message board in February and just ran and ran. In fact, it's been just too damn good to truncate into our regular Message Board summary, so we've squeezed a couple of extra editorial pages to present...*

Greatest moments in comics history

STEVE MILLER *(serialm@globalnet .co.uk) kicked off the subject with:* This month's funnybooks had one particular standout – **The Authority**. We already know this book has been a revelation, but I've got to admit to being impressed by Jenny Sparks' speech halfway through #11, to the entire planet, fag in hand, union jack vest and khakis, "While I'm gone, you all bloody well be good." Absolutely fantastic. This got me thinking... There was a big feature in **The Observer**'s magazine, where readers had written in to select their favourite moments in film. They collated them all together to make up a *100 Greatest Moments in Film History*.

Citizen Kane didn't feature, apparently it's so stacked full of greatest moments that the vote was split and I was amazed to see nothing from *Vertigo*. Apparently *The Usual Suspects* is responsible for the most memorable moment in film history. But there were bits I couldn't argue with, including Cary Grant getting chased by the crop-duster in *North by Northwest;* Jimmy Stewart running through the streets in *It's a Wonderful Life* and the Death Star blowing up in *Star Wars* (the first time!)

And I set to wondering, could you do the same for comics? It acknowledges in the text that a lot of the greatest moments contained a revelation ("Luke, I am your father"). Many were down to nostalgia, and I suspect that if we were going to nominate our favourite moments from comicbook history, we'd follow much the same lines.

Then again, I've been racking my brains, and apart from the Jenny Sparks moment up above I can't come up with much. Except...

- The X-Men and The Sentinels fighting it out at Rockefeller Plaza – I read this at a sufficiently early age that I was in awe of it, possibly because of the sheer scale of The Sentinels, possibly because it mixed them up with what was obviously a real building. Have since been to New York, was upset to not see any Sentinels.
- **Shade** #50 – The shooting at the supermarket, the fish telling Shade he shouldn't trust the Devil, and poor Kathy...
- Possibly the ending of **Watchmen** – Ozymandias explains his plan to Nite Owl and Rorschach. "What a good job we got here in time to stop you," they say. "Don't be daft" replies the cleverest man in the world, "I did it half an hour ago."
- And that Jenny Sparks thing. I've read it four or five times, and it's bloody brilliant.

Shame I can't come up with any better examples. Anybody else?

RICH JOHNSTON *(twisting@hotmail.com) snapped at the bait, with Alan Moore taking up half of his magic moments:*

- "Damn you, Liz, you're laughing at my life!" from *Marvelman* in **Warrior** #2.

THEN HOW DO YOU EXPECT ME TO? LOOK I'LL ACCEPT THE FACT THAT YOU'RE SOMEHOW A FOOT TALLER, YOU'RE TWENTY YEARS YOUNGER AND YOU'RE STILL MY HUSBAND LORD KNOWS WHY. I JUST WILL.
BUT ALL THIS OTHER STUFF MARVELMAN FAMILY? YOUNG NASTYMAN? MIKE, IF THERE HAD REALLY BEEN A MARVELMAN IN THE FIFTIES WOULDN'T I HAVE HEARD ABOUT HIM??
I-I DON'T KNOW. MAYBE THEY HUSHED IT UP OR SOMETHING, BECAUSE OF.
BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENED IN 1963
DON'T TELL ME... A COUPLE MORE MARVELBOYS TURNED UP AND YOU FORMED A FOOTBALL TEAM.
DAMN YOU, LIZ, YOU'RE LAUGHING AT MY LIFE!!
THE FLOORING IS SOLID OAK. HE SPLINTERS IT TO MATCHWOOD...

Alan Moore & Garry Leach: Marvelman, *Warrior #2*

- The line "The world still turns... and sometimes people drop off" from Swamp Thing's funeral.
- "Mind the oranges, Marlon!" from **2000 AD**'s *DR and Quinch*.
- When the girl cracks in **Spawn** #8.
- "I made a little noise" in **From Hell**.

And the non-Alan Moore moments...

- When the dreams collide in *A Game Of You* in **Sandman**.
- The chocolate lovers of Delirium in *Brief Lives* in **Sandman**.
- Superman dropping Jimmy Corrigan off on an island in Chris Ware's **Acme Novelty Library**.
- The breaking of the tablet in Will Eisner's **A Contract with God**.
- The Guy Gardner ice-skating tribute in **Justice League of America**.

MARTIN SHIPP *(maggshipp@aol.com) mentioned:* The Midnighter's "I love being me" from **Authority** #4. The Doctor Under Train page from **I Die At Midnight**.

- ...And realising **Sandman** was crap.

WILLIAM LOGAN *(logan@classof79.freeserve.co.uk) offered:*

- "Gaze Into The Fist Of Dredd" from *Judge Death Lives*, **2000 AD** Prog 227.

MANTRAP!
GAZE INTO THE FACE OF FEAR!
FOR A MOMENT THE "BY CHILL OF TERROR COURSES DOWN DREDD'S SPINE. THE SHOCK OF THE GAZE CAN KILL AN ORDINARY MAN -
BUT DREDD IS A JUDGE - AND JUDGES ARE NOT ORDINARY MEN!
GAZE INTO THE FIST OF DREDD!

John Wagner & Brian Bolland: Judge Dredd, *2000 AD #227*

DAVE BRZESKI *(cathaven@alt2600.com) suggested:* The scene at the end of #17 in the current volume of **Strangers in Paradise**. Francine comes down the stairs to find Katchoo in the kitchen making gingerbread men with her daughter.

The look of emotion on her mother's face was the most brilliantly drawn scene I can remember seeing. It's the only time I've ever re-read a single three-page sequence of a comic over and over again for several weeks.

GERRY ALANGUILAN *(timawa@laguna.net) had a mixed bag:*

- The appearance of the evil Captain Marvel at the end of **Kingdom Come** #3. Raised the hackles on my neck!
- Batman beating Superman in **Dark Knight Returns**: "I want you to remember Clark... The one man who beat you." Jeez!
- Phoenix's death in **X-Men** #137.

Alex Ross: *Kingdom Come #3*

CARL HJELLSTROM *(carl.73@lineone.net) offered his selection along with a twist:*

- How about the scene in **Storm-Watch** vol 2, #2 where Fuji admits to orgasming every five minutes?
- **The Authority** has so many, but I loved The Midnighter's "I won this fight before you even showed up".
- The first issue of **Druid**.
- Definitely too many high points to mention in Grant Morrison's **JLA**.
- The issues of **Excalibur** and **Storm Watch** where the teams go to the pub. The two best issues of their respective runs.
- One image I will always remember is Linda McQuillan (Captain UK) ripping the Fury's spine out, while it closes in on a cowering Brian Braddock. No one draws true blind fury as well as Alan Davis, do they?

How about worst moments? Mine in no particular order:

- Post-Alan Davis issues of **ClanDestine**.
- The non-death of Aunt May.
- Peter David leaving **The Incredible Hulk**.
- Reading the final part of **Avengers Forever**, and realising that it had finished.

IAN MUIR *(ian.muir@zoom.co.uk):* About those worst moments in comics...

"Congratulations, Mrs Liefeld, it's a boy..."

PHIL HALL *(squonk_uk@yahoo.com) brought it back to great moments with:*

● **Amazing Spider-Man** #33 where Spidey – trapped under loads of heavy machinery and with Aunt May hospitalised and critically ill (for the very first time, no less!) – needs to summon all of his strength to free himself. Beautifully rendered by Steve Ditko.

THE WEIGHT-- IS UNBEARABLE! EVERY MUSCLE-- AGHES--!
MY HEAD-- IT'S SPINNING-- EVERYTHING'S BEGINNING TO --WHIRL AROUND--!
THE STRAIN! IT-- IT'S UNBEARABLE --!

Stan Lee & Steve Ditko: *Amazing Spider-Man #33*

● The moment when Spidey breaks into the control room to discover that all the crap that had been thrown at him in previous issues was set into place by Harry Osborne before his death. The face of the Green Goblin appearing on all the monitors saying "Gotcha!" [**Amazing Spider-Man** #394]

● Gumby and Pokey being carried in buckets by a little pony through the pits of hell in search of Santa Claus. [**Gumby's Winter Fun Special**]

● The death of The Flash in **Crisis on Infinite Earths** always gets me.

THERE IS HOPE... THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE...
TIME TO SAVE THE WORLD!
TIME... BACK IN TIME...
DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO...WE MUST SAVE THE WORLD...
...WE MUST SAVE THE WORLD...
MY CANNON-- HE HAS DESTROYED MY CANNON!
NOOOOOOO

Marv Wolfman & George Perez: *Crisis on Infinite Earths #8*

● **Amazing Adventures** #34: Upon killing the alien creation that has decimated his group, Killraven realises that despite destroying the robot construct all it was doing was following its programming, it couldn't feel the way he did. Destroying it meant nothing, another could be built. Killraven's team could not.

● But my favourite moment has to be Captain Britain's face when he confronts the Fury for the second time, having been killed the first. It was the first time I'd seen genuine stark staring fear on the face of a superhero and was chillingly perfected by Alan Davis.

MICHAEL NORWITZ *(blaklion@ best.com) continued the Captain Britain theme:*

● There are many moments in this series that remain with me. How about... "Us? But Captain, who ever said anything about *us?*" "I can see the future, and it is cancelled." Or "Not wet like her. She's wet because she was very frightened."

IAN MUIR *returned with a more serious list of his greatest moments:*

● The Masters of Evil storyline from **Avengers** circa issues #270-277. Great build-up, organised villains, Moonstone doing what she does best, heroes taking a serious pounding and a nail-biting finale.

● The Dark Phoenix saga, with all the Hellfire stuff beforehand. Chris Claremont has never topped this, and I fear his new run will disappoint immeasurably.

● *The Great Cow Race* from **Bone**. You need to read this. All of you!

● **Batman: Year One**: "They've got him *cornered*. They've got him *out-numbered*. They've got him *trapped*. They're in *Trouble*..." Nuff said.

● #12 of **Alpha Flight**. Still brings a tear to this cynical old fanboy's eye.

● The first year of **Thunderbolts**. Cleverest comic concept of the '90s?

● Batman fights Guy Gardner, **Justice League** #5 (1988). If you haven't read it, I'm saying nothing. If you have, you know what I'm talking about!

IAN SALMON *(ianrsalmon@hot mail. com) kept the thread going with:*

● The Joker suddenly pushing a henchman into the path of an oncoming truck in *The Joker Fish* by Englehart and Rogers in **Detective Comics**. The first time I'd seen him switch his mood from comedy to pure evil like that.

● The Death of Gwen Stacy: My realisation that it was the whiplash from the attempted "save by webbing" that killed her. [**Amazing Spider-Man** #121]

● The ensuing death of The Green Goblin, utter revenge fantasy. [**Amazing Spider-Man** #122]

● Aunt May's death! No, honestly, as it stood it was perfect – realising that she'd always known about Peter's "other life". A classic tale full of truths about family and love. Shame Marvel killed it all by concocting an absurdity about actress doubles.

John Watson homage to Gwen Stacy

CHRIS SPICER *(mr.dog@free4 all.co.uk) added:*

● The final page of **Judge Dredd: America**, where the main protagonist has just made an impassioned speech about not giving up hope and striving for our freedom, and then Judge Dredd has his say, and destroys any hope that may have been building.

● When Jack Carter takes off his coat and you see he's got Spider Jerusalem tattoos in **Planetary** #7, and you realise just what Warren Ellis has been going on about for the rest of the issue.

● Equally, **Planetary** #6. Ellis has spent the previous issues building up Snow as the most likeable character, and then he brings it home to the reader that you never quite know everything about anyone.

● **V For Vendetta**, when V reveals that he's had control of Fate all along.

● There are too many in Grant Morrison's **JLA** for me to be able to pick out one, but I did like Batman uncovering the White Martians and, more recently, Superman rescuing the Huntress from space.

● **Hellblazer**. Paul Jenkins' final issue, right at the end: "Nobody got hurt too badly. Nothing that can't be fixed, given enough time. Nobody died... except me."

● The moment in **Strangehaven** when I realised I'd worked out the plot.

● Morpheus' death in **Sandman**.

● The Chucky and Pony characters in the first **100 Bullets** story arc.

DAVE VANNER *(vanner@supanet.com) remembered how a certain Marvel Barbarian altered his perspective:*

● I can still remember the thrill, as an 11-year old, of reading Roy Thomas and Barry Smith's **Conan** for the first time – *The Twilight of the Grim Grey God*, *The Tower of the Elephant*, *Rogues in the House*, etc. The hero having a girlfriend who was a prostitute and dumping her in a cesspool when she pissed him off – great stuff! Much under-appreciated as a groundbreaker for the adult comics of later years.

ANTONY JOHNSTON *(antony@mostlyblack.com) came up with:*

● The last scene of **Cerebus: High Society** – another of those "Oh arse, it was here all along" moments.

● The entire "return in baptism" scene from **Dark Knight Returns**.

● The endless bureaucracy scene in an **Asterix** book (**Legionnaire**, I think?).

IAN PATTINSON *(ian@spinneyhead.free-online.co.uk) added:*

● The first sight of Batman in **Dark Knight Returns** with the narration which starts "If I were an older man, this would hurt."

● There's a scene in **New Mutants** #45, the issue before the Mutant Massacre, where Kitty Pryde gets up before a memorial service for a walk-on mutant who had committed suicide and gives a speech about tolerance. It's very *Dawson's Creek*, but I've always been a sucker for that sort of thing.

Care to play? Send in your fondest memories to the address stated on page 3 for a future issue's return to this subject

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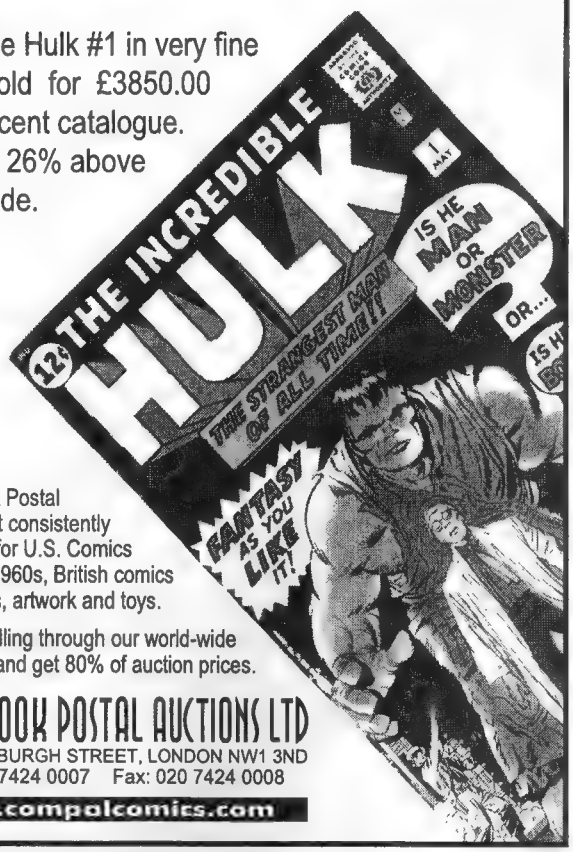

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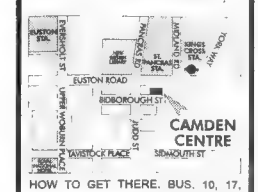

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COMMENT

Comment is a forum to enable fans and professionals alike to express their personal points of view on aspects of the comics industry. As such, the following opinions do not necessarily reflect those of this publication, but space will be given in subsequent issues to well-reasoned opposing views. Submissions are edited only for grammar, clarity and brevity.

Still a Crisis on Infinite Earths

Comment by David Hoffman: davidahoffman@compuserve.com

I'D LIKE TO add a note to the **Crisis on Infinite Earths** debate, particularly Alan Dimes' comment (**CI** #120).

For all those who view **Crisis** cynically, I'd like to stress the quality of the series itself. I was 14 when it came out, and it blew me away – I still think that it's a cracking piece of work by Marv Wolfman and George Perez, both on top form (as could be seen also from their **New Teen Titans** work). They'd seeded the story with the mysterious Monitor appearing all over the place and the whole "worlds will live, worlds will die..." thing. They picked up on the, somewhat clichéd yearly **JLA** *Crisis* stories, with one that really justified the scale of powers if all DC's greatest heroes were in one story (compare the reaction to Grant Morrison's **JLA**, and you'll get the idea).

At the same time, the basis of the villain sprung out of many strands of DC continuity, especially the whole Green Lanterns/Guardians thing. Plus it was on a scale of crossover that hadn't been done before – the only comparison was Marvel's *Secret Wars*, which was a very different sort of story. All in all, ground-breaking (easily forgotten in view of the rather tedious attempts by DC since to repeat universe-shattering events).

So what about the outcome? Well, having all the main characters on one Earth was very sensible. Who was lost from continuity? The Golden Age Batman, Superman and Wonder Woman, whose stories had long since ceased to be part of the then present continuity as a result of Julius Schwartz's revamp 20 years earlier.

Did we really miss the Golden Age Green Arrow and Aquaman? Of course none of this prevents a good 1940s comicbook from being a good read. Probably the most important character lost was Joe Kubert's Huntress, a shame but not a catastrophe. Plus it meant you could have Dr Fate, Captain Marvel and Blue Beetle in the JLA – and look what fun that gave us in the capable hands of Keith Giffen et al!

Don't forget also, that John Byrne reinventing Superman or Perez's Wonder Woman were not necessary parts of Crisis – it just gave them an chance to give a massive shot in the arm to characters badly needing one.

I stand by Crisis – it wasn't inevitable, or to blame for the mess DC has since made of certain heroes (Hawkman, Parallax or Green Arrow – the real one with the beard) and it was a cracking series which still stand up to being read today. Anyway what's wrong with a bit of continuity now and then? (Don't answer that!)

Now, where's my box of **New Teen Titans**...

Back at the Crisis once more

Comment by Andy Fitzpatrick : the_green_lurker@hotmail.com

I'VE JUST read Alan Dimes' excellently thought-out reply *(Comment,* **CI** #120) to my own comment (**CI** #118) and felt it deserved a reply in turn.

What I meant by the comics industry going down the toilet was the way DC and Marvel lost respect for characters and fans and started churning out mindless garbage by the bucket-load. And the way Marvel fed the egos of prima donna artists to the point they decided they still weren't being pampered and cossetted enough, leading them to break out on their own and strike a blow for creators' rights by churning out garbage on their own terms.

The founding of Image to produce garbage about superheroes led to the founding of other companies to produce garbage about all kinds of things (including science fiction, horror and pornography).

This gave the industry its current rich diversity of garbage, which is so much better than the more limited choice of garbage we had before!?!

As for what I meant by saying the post-**Crisis** versions of core characters should have been based on Golden Age versions, imagine the following scenario...

In 1986, despite my being only 15, DC recognises my unequalled talent and hires me to revamp Superman. When I'm through with him, he is very different: Superman began his career in 1938. He married Lois Lane in 1948. Their wedding was delayed by her kidnapping by Lex Luthor, who had invented an extended-life elixir and needed a guinea pig before risking it on himself. Superman rescued Lois and the wedding went ahead, but not before Luthor had administered the elixir to Lois and then himself. They both remain perpetually in their prime after that. Meanwhile a side-effect of his invulnerability extends the life-span of Superman in similar fashion.

The result is that Superman and Lois are still happily married, still youthful and still battling Luthor nearly 40 years later, in 1986. You

get to keep the Golden Age origin and have Superman and his core supporting characters young and active in a contemporary setting. You also have the poignant realism of Jimmy Olsen being a nostalgic old man remembering the adventures of his youth, and that sort of thing.

As well as, say, three titles featuring the adventures of Superman in the present you can have another book retelling classic Golden and Silver Age stories in a **Legends Of The DCU**-type format. Blending respect for the past with topicality.

The likes of Batman, Robin and the Joker can be in a similar situation thanks to an ancient potion from the Mysterious East that they all ended up drinking, or something. Alfred Pennyworth could be a long-deceased ghostly advisor, as in John Byrne's **Generations** series.

The point is that DC didn't have to delete Superman and Batman from the Golden Age to still feature them in contemporary stories. The reason they did that was sickening conservatism – every character had to be still available, as a contemporary one, in his original form. Can't tamper with tradition by having Jimmy Olsen a pensioner and Alfred a ghost in case it hurts sales. Greedy twaddle.

Does anyone out there read a Superman comic for Jimmy Olsen or a Batman comic for Alfred Pennyworth? I think not...

Making a Crisis of things

Comment by Steven Morrell, Sheffield, Yorkshire

DC'S BIGGEST problem with **Crisis** was not the event but its repercussions. No one actually knew what the characters' histories were.

We knew Superman was from Krypton, Batman witnessed his parents murder, Hal Jordan was given his ring by a dying alien and Barry Allen was splashed with some electronically-charged chemicals. But everything became a mishmash, wanting to save parts of continuity, and lose others. With Hypertime, the DCU becomes the base universe, and all the other stories become *Elseworlds* realities.

Over at Marvel, Storm's American parents were killed in the 1956 Suez Crisis (by a French Vanatu fighter-bomber if I remember correctly) and Charles Xavier was in Israel helping the survivors of the Holocaust, went home, was drafted into the US Army, and served in Korea, where he was injured. Ben Grim was a WWII fighter pilot. Tony Stark was a munitions manufacturer in Vietnam. The Fantastic Four's origin only stands if nobody made it into space before them. You can move Tony Stark's origin to the Gulf War and Storm's to the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, you could even make Magneto a Bosnian. But, because the Marvel universe is a whole, you've still got the FF and the Shogun Warriors, the X-Men and the Micronauts.

Everybody has met everyone else. So everything that happens in one comic applies to everyone else.

The role of Eros Comics

Comment by Paul Westfield, Clifton Reynes, Buckinghamshire

WOULD I be correct in assuming that Eros comics are produced purely for masturbatory purposes?

The reason I ask is that during my teens I often bought two men's magazines; **Men Only** and **Playboy**. I'm not about to lie to you and say teenage temptation and an empty house didn't stop me from taking advantage of these magazines, but a lot of the stuff, especially in **Playboy**, was anything but wanking literature.

Most of the Eros titles I've seen are poor quality rags chock-a-block with crutch shots and throbbing members.

My comics collection is pretty extensive. It ranges from '60s DCs, '70s Marvels and onwards, just about anything that looks good or reads well. I'm not against the odd bad girl book (done well). I read superheroes, Vertigo, Dark Horse and a few interesting-looking indies. So, I think I'm pretty well read. I also have an almost complete collection of **Heavy Metal**, which has been one of the most erotic comics ever published.

A couple of weeks ago, I ventured into my 15-year-old son's room and I found three specific issues of **Heavy Metal** – the *Druuna* issues – T&A, alien sex, and lots more. He has never shown the slightest interest in my hobby. He's into computer games, bikes, and getting his hands dirty.

After flicking through the issues, I figured he'd hooked them out because of the amount of nudity. Being a devious sort of dad, I pulled (inappropriate choice of words, I know) my set of **Ironwood** out. I left them in the den and forgot about them. This weekend I found the comics under my son's bed.

Ironwood is an exception to the rule. Take out the majority of the sex scenes and you have a four-part swashbuckling story that never concluded. It has a story and he might have been looking at it from an aesthetic angle. But the likelihood is I'd find sticky tissues somewhere in that room. Now, as I said, the quality of a lot of Eros books is poor and I can't see any reason other than as hand relief rather than a stimulating... No, hang on, bad choice of words again... an entertaining read. Here is my point: In my local comics shops a few years ago, there were many Eros and other sex books in the adult section. The average cost of these was about £5. For a fiver you can buy a quality girlie book and cum over real women with feasibly realistic body parts. What is the fascination? I could ask my son, but he'd just die of embarrassment.

So what's the score? Do these books serve any other purpose than to keep comics in the gutter and keep Kleenex in business?

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9 EXCELLENT IN BOTH SCRIPT AND ART *This is the top score you are likely to see.*

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7 VERY VERY GOOD *In one area, but only average in the other. Alternatively very good all around.*

6 GOOD *An enjoyable middle of the road read, a dangerous pursuit; not particularly exciting but solid and without disappointments.*

5 AN AVERAGE COMIC *No more, no less. Simply an average comic. Alternatively an OK title which is dragged down by its script or art.*

4 FAIR *One you can happily live without.*

3 POOR *Not worth the price of admission.*

2 ABSOLUTELY AWFUL *Not worth reading, even if it was free.*

1 DISASTROUS *A comic that should be accompanied by a government health warning.*

0 THE ABSOLUTE OPPOSITE OF A 10 *Something so bad it is hard to imagine anything worse. However, a zero score is used sparingly in case the next issue is actually even worse still!*

REVIEWS

Because few retailers allow titles to be read before purchase, Comics International's comprehensive reviews section enables comics readers to keep abreast of the wide range of titles currently being published and draw readers' attention to comics they might otherwise ignore. Naturally, this section is of even greater benefit to readers who rely solely on mail order, as they can only judge the quality of a title after purchase.

***Review codes:** Individual titles are judged against all similar comics, past and present, on a 1 to 10 basis, while a comparison is made against previous issues of the same title ranging from <---> to <+++>. Hence, a top quality comic may score a consistent 9 against all others, but have slid from a previous issue's 10, denoted by <->. No change is marked by <=>.*

*We do not compare **Bone** with **X-Men**, but review each within their genre.*

REVIEW PANEL: A. Tahsin Bhuiya (ATB), Jon Edwards (JE), James Gibbs (JG), Stephen Hall (SH), Rol Hirst (RH), Adrian Kermode (AK), Mike Kidson (MK), Tom McSween (TM), Lee Neal (LJN), Lee Nelson (LN), Rob Nott (RN), Arvind Onipoor (AO), Chris Spicer (CS), Reuben Willmott (RW)

Dark Horse

Aliens vs Predator vs Terminator 1

by Schultz & Rubi + Ivy

The plot of this irresistibly high-concept blockbuster involves that old Aliens franchise staple – a scientist messing with alien DNA. This time, however, the scientist is actually a Terminator. What really makes this story special is that it picks up from the events of the movie *Alien Resurrection* with Annalee Call (Winona Ryder's character) recruiting a weary and embittered Ripley (or rather, her clone) in an attempt to stop the experiments. Unlike some crossovers, writer Mark Schultz has succeeded in balancing action with strong characterisation. (SH) 8

Dirty Pair: Run from the Future 4

by Warren & Kinnaird

<+> The end of another eye-searing adventure for the scantily-clad sci-fi chicks with attitude explodes from the truly twisted mind of Adam Warren. This one's got it all: Schoolgirl uniforms, bandage bondage, cannibalism, really disgusting parasitic aliens and (gasp) could that be a sub-plot hidden among all that random violence? (AK) 7

Nevermen 1

by Amara & Davis

A group of near identical trenchcoat-wearing vigilantes investigates a series of unusual burglaries and attacks. There is the basis for a good comic here, but it's hampered by minimal plot and chunky dialogue. Philip Amara tries too hard to be mysterious, but ends up being unengaging. But Guy Davis's art conveys the atmosphere wonderfully. (RW) 5

Sin City: Hell and Back 9

by Miller; Maverick

<-> Wallace infiltrates a factory complex, where he discovers drugged women in cages. However, there is no sign of Esther, who he finds after making a deal with her captors. A very disappointing ending to the mini-series with no great surprises. There are some decent visuals in this extra long (56 page) issue, but there is certainly not enough here to justify the $4.95 cover price. (ATB) 3

Star Wars 17

by Truman & Nadeau + Ensign

<---> Master Windu and Depa Billaba follow a trail that leads them to the Akk Dogs, who are being used for the well-named Circus Horrificus. More like an issue which comes after the Emissaries to Malastare story rather than a part of it, and the art suffers from the absence of Tom Lyle's smooth pencilling. (ATB) 5

The World Below: Deeper and Stranger 4

by Chadwick & Chadwick + Randall; Maverick

<=> The team members are tricked into becoming pets by the underground colony and when they are caught after one escape attempt, they face a worse fate. A good but sad ending to a nicely illustrated mini-series. (ATB) 7

DC Comics

Aquaman 68

by Jurgens & Epting + Rapmund

<-> The only part of this issue that does not look entirely convincing features the way in which a group of Cerdians decide to hear what Arthur has to say instead of continuing to beat him to death. Then the rest of the story, in which Orm is defeated and Garth rescues his son, is handled very well by Dan Jurgens with Steve Epting and Norm Rapmund giving a picturesque view of the future Atlantis. (ATB) 7

The Authority 14

by Millar & Quitely + Scott; WildStorm

<-> The Doctor is protected by the baby he is holding, whose full power is unleashed. Then Dr Krigstein's superteam comes face to face with the other members of The Authority. Mark Millar uses great dialogue that stops this from becoming just an ordinary big-fight issue and although Frank Quitely's pencilling and Trevor Scott's inking is not a smooth combination, the art is very good in a few, highly-detailed panels (Dr Krigstein's last page appearance, for example). (ATB) 8

<+> The Authority faces up to The Avengers in all but name. This is the kind of story Marvel, sadly, would never dream of approving in a million years. Bold, brutal, witty and realistic, Mark Millar's work on The Authority confirms his position as one of the rising stars working in the superhero genre today. On a par with Warren Ellis? Oh, yes – you betcha! (RN) 8

Azrael: Agent of the Bat 66

by O'Neil & Robinson + Pascoe

<++> A familiar face returns, and Batman makes a revelation to Azrael that could change his life forever. The art is passable if not brilliant, but plot-wise this issue is the most exciting for quite some while, at least for longtime readers. (CS) 7

Batman: Dark Victory 7

by Loeb & Sale

<++> Two-Face arranges an unusual court session for the Calendar Man and Alfred helps Batman overcome a mental block in his investigation into the Holiday killings. A good, well drawn issue with Two-Face stopping the next hanging occurring on April Fool's Day and the ending introduces a familiar circus-performing family. (ATB) 7

<-> The problem with this latest series is that it's really not covering much new ground, retreading the now-familiar whodunnit angle from this creative team's previous Bat-books. An attempt to tie the Robin origin into this formula might inject further interest, but midway, the title is already dragging. (RH) 5

Batman: Dreamland

by Grant & Breyfogle

Alan Grant and Norm Breyfogle have produced many great Batman tales. This is not one of them. The Dark Knight is shoehorned into a dull story of government conspiracies set in Area 51 (Dreamland). It's strange to see Batman musing over the existence of extraterrestrials when he works with them in the JLA. Breyfogle's art is as dynamic as ever. (SH) 4

Batman: Gotham Knights 4

by Grayson + Arcudi & Ryan + Salmons

<+> Although the dialogue of the mysterious narrator is too psychological in places, the second part of *Samsara* is better than the first, with Batman becoming more sympathetic towards Sam Yates. Paul Ryan doesn't produce anything spectacular, but his art is easier to follow than the black and white panels by Tony Salmons for *Greetings from Gotham City*. This is where John Arcudi writes another story with a mysterious narrator who gets to see Batman in action on his visit to Gotham City. (ATB) 8

Batman/Huntress: Cry for Blood 1

by Rucka & Burchett

An arrow sticking out of a corpse pulled

from Gotham River suggests the Huntress has committed the foul deed. This issue also features the family history of the Bertinellis, covering four generations. A slow start to this mini-series, but nicely illustrated by Rick Burchett. (ATB) 6

Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight 131

by O'Neil & Cariello + Ryan

<=> The fifth and final part of *The Arrow and the Bat* serial, which has provided a welcome spotlight for Green Arrow/Oliver Queen. Dennis O'Neil has Batman delivering the occasional dry, witty quip without losing his Dark Knight demeanour. Sergio Cariello and Matt Ryan's art is bold and unfussy, but Hugh Fleming's cover is very poorly painted. (SH) 7

Birds of Prey 19

by Dixon & Giordino + Guice

<--> Perhaps it's the lacklustre fill-in art by Dick Giordiano, but the story this month (Dinah in sub-Bosnian human drama) seems rushed and moralising. Tackling the big issues of today is always a difficult endeavour, and unfortunately this attempt falls flat on its face. (RN) 5

Catwoman 80

by Carlton & Johnson + Faucher

<++> A private rehabilitation scheme turns out to be worse than state prison for Catwoman, as the residents have no contact with the outside world and are given medication to keep them in a placid state. There is no easy escape for Catwoman, which makes this an interesting issue. The art is not as good as in the last two issues. (ATB) 7

Deadenders 4

by Brubaker & Pleece + Case + Stephens; Vertigo

<=> Beezer refuses to cooperate with Dr Gagon and his mother tells him the truth behind his adoption. This is a well-written conclusion to *Stealing the Sun* and there is also an enjoyable Archie-style backup story. The art is much better than last issue, with decent pencilling by Warren Pleece. (ATB) 8

The Dreaming 49

by Kiernan & Hojgaard + Randall; Vertigo

<--> Neither Thessalian nor Queen Titania get the glamour stone and Nuala makes sure that it will never cause trouble for anyone else. Caitlin Kiernan delivers a smoothly written finale, although Nuala's transformation allows her to get over her suffering too easily. (ATB) 7

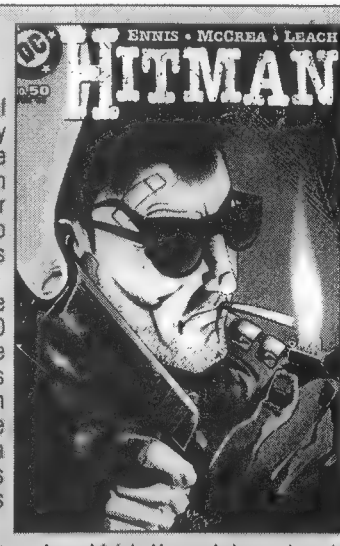
Faith 5

by McKeever; Vertigo

<=> Murr is now in Heaven's clutches and Faith meeting with Satan is not as surprising as finding out what the Mother Superior has been up to! Parts of the story are not easy to understand, but it all ends in a satisfactory manner. Ted McKeever's idiosyncratic bizarre style of artwork never allows anything to look dull. (ATB) 7

Hitman 50

by Ennis & McCrea + Leach



<=> Fifty years in the future, the exploits of Tommy and his friends are legendary, but only one remains standing (and it's a real surprise when we learn who!). Tying up loose ends from the last storyline and foreshadowing a darker future for this title – and a further descent into tragedy for Tommy – this is Garth Ennis at his very best. (RH) 9

<=> Following last issue's tragic ending, we are told about Tommy's actions of revenge, 50 years in the future. Set in a time where the exploits of Tommy and the gang at Noonan's bar are stuff of exaggerated legends, Garth Ennis gives us a glimpse into the future while not giving anything away. Well worked and a fitting 50th anniversary issue. John McCrea's art has always been the right style to tell this tale. (LJN) 8

<+> 50 years in the future, a group of students go for a drink in Noonan's bar and meet a strange old man who sets them straight about a few things. This issue gives some indication of what lies ahead for the characters, and paints quite a dark picture. The artwork is as good as ever, and the story is genuinely touching. (CS) 7

Flash 161

by McGreal & Pelletier + Hazlewood

<+> Another fill-in, flashing back to Jay Garrick's honeymoon, enlivened by Paul Pelletier's art on the Justice Society and its foes. Writer Pat McGreal handles the old-time setting well. (RH) 6

<+++> Jay Garrick's wife shows a very understanding attitude towards him as their honeymoon is interrupted by his JSA team-mates, who take him to a fancy hotel and casino attracting the attention of the Shade and two other rogues. Paul Pelletier and Doug Hazlewood provide more wonderful art and despite the pointless JSA conversation about secret identities, this is still a fun-packed issue. (ATB) 8

Four Horsemen 4

by Rodi & Ribic; Vertigo

<+> I expected this issue to be fairly predictable, with Death feeling unwanted this time, but Robert Rodi comes up with something better, with all Four Horsemen making modern-day adjustments to their roles. On the whole, this has been a good mini-series, but badly let down by dull colouring. (ATB) 5

Gen^{13} #52

by Lobdell & Benes; WildStorm

<-> Having lost her superpowers, Caitlin quits the team to begin a new life. A limp, unconvincing storyline that bears a striking resemblance to a very similar plot from the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* TV series. The patchy generic art doesn't help matters, either. (JE) 5

Hellblazer 149

by Azzarello & Corben; Vertigo

<+> John Constantine finds it difficult to cope with solitary confinement, as faces from the past haunt him (not original, but perhaps this is Brian Azzarello's way of showing his awareness of Hellblazer history). One of John's magical skills sets in motion a peculiar sequence of events that leads to an ideal outcome for him. This issue reveals information about how John ended up in prison and Richard Corben gives his best portrayal so far of JC on the final page. (ATB) 8

<=> John's in solitary – but never truly alone – as the prison saga approaches its climax. Good to see Brian Azzarello bring back John's ghosts, although 'is 'abit of dropping too many of John's aitches still niggles. ("Ah, you Brits and your inability to pronounce the eigth letter!") Rich Corben turns in some lovely visuals, even if JC looks 12 'alf the time. (RH) 7

<+> Brian Azzarello's John Constantine really is a dangerous piece of work. Sitting alone in solitary confinement, John's influence reaches out and drives the prison into the grip of madness in a way that Rorschach could only have wet his bed dreaming of. Whether the power that John is suddenly capable of wielding is in keeping with any previous issues is of course a moot point. On the basis of this issue he could probably take out the Justice League of America between lighting cigarettes. (RN) 7

<=> Framed for murder, John Constantine is locked in solitary confinement, just as his nicotine craving kicks in. Still, that doesn't mean that he isn't in complete control of the situation. Gripping stuff, as Brian Azzarello shows what a mastery of Constantine's character he has. The art seems more at home now. (CS) 8

The Invisibles -1

by Morrison & Quitely + Stokes; Vertigo

<=> So here it is, and Grant Morrison hands over the reigns of power and anarchy to his audience, who may find themselves too busy rereading back issues to fully appreciate everything that happens here. Is the only way to beat the enemy to play their game better than they do? "Every number is infinite..." so this series as a whole scores a definite... X (RH)

<+> The dense super information highway of previous issues explodes into a garbled adrenaline rush of baffling images and barely coherent dialogue, as this long running series comes to its conclusion. Whether the ending leaves you reeling, or thinking "What the hell was all that about?" one thing is certain – if you've been along for the ride since the beginning, the Invisibles has probably changed your view of the world. How many comics can offer that in addition to entertainment? Nice and smooth, as King Mob would say. (RN) 7

JLA #42

by Johnson & Pajarillo + Wong

<-> It's another of those "Oh look, our superpowers don't work here" stories. Apparently the JLA had problems in "'synchronising to the faster molecular rate of the microbe beings" that they set out to fight this issue. I know the feeling – it happens to me all the time. Still, I manage to do a full day's work without complaining. (RN) 6

<--> The Atom leads a group of heroes, who shrink down to enter a boy's brain. They find that a suspected tumour is actually a civilisation of microscopic creatures. The art is fair enough, but the plot, especially the ending – which draws parallels with Superman's origins – is just plain silly. (CS) 4

Justice Society of America 100-Page Super Spectacular 1

by various

Forget DC's *Silver Age* skip week comics: This is the real thing. And with two splendid Murphy Anderson art jobs and the first ever reprinting of the last 1940s JSA story it's not only real, it's good. The weak Dr Mid-Nite story loses the package a few points, but otherwise this showcases DC's Silver Age material at its best. (MK) 7

League of Extraordinary Gentlemen 5

by Moore & O'Neill; America's Best Comics

<=> Our heroes finally realise who they have been working for and what exactly he intends to do. The team of the Invisible Man, Captain Nemo, Miss Murray, Alan Quatermain and Dr Jekyll/Mr Hyde is a wonderful concept and quite brilliantly executed. (JG) 8

<+> You know spring is in the air when this year's edition of LOEG hits the comic shops. But it's been worth the wait, as Alan Moore's broad literary brush strokes and Kevin O'Neill's surreal art serves to practically reinvent the Victorian gothic genre as their own. Now roll on May 2001 for the concluding chapter... (RN) 8

<=> Well worth the wait, as M reveals his identity and the full scale of his plans. The script is full of wit and invention, and Kevin O'Neill excels himself. Also, this has possibly the best letters page in the comics industry. (CS) 8

<-> Thrill! At the Spectacle of Sherlock Holmes battling Moriarty as the Reichenback falls. Swoon! As the Invisible Man does the opposite of a strip tease. Marvel! At Kevin O'Neill's dashing pictograms. Curse! Alan Moore for writing yet more wonderful penny dreadfuls. (RW) 6

Lucifer 2

by Carey & Weston

+ Hodgkins; Vertigo

<+> Two forms of unpleasant suffering, one mental and the other physical, are featured in this excellent issue. Lucifer punishes Meleos for freeing the living Tarot deck and Karl shows where his friendship with Jayesh stands, while he is a member of a racist gang. The evil spirits of the Tarot deck start to spread their influence on some of the citizens of Hamburg and a host body is found for the cards. James Hodgkins' inking does smother the pencilling in some panels, but the rest of the art is good. Duncan Fegredo's cover is impressive, dynamic and more eye-catching than last month's. (ATB) 8

<=> This new series is shaping up very nicely indeed. Everything about it bodes well for the future – strong scripting, interesting characters, good art, and just the right balance of things supernatural. Lucifer is probably the best Sandman spin-off Vertigo has produced to date. (RN) 7

Nightwing 44

by Dixon & Zircher + Marzan Jr

<-> Dick and his new partner think they have got the upper hand on Blockbuster, who is more than happy to see them and reveals his true intentions to them. Not a spectacular issue, but faultless in both script and art. (ATB) 6

100 Bullets 11

by Azzarello & Risso; Vertigo

<--> A waitress gets the bad news in gruesome detail from Agent Graves about what has happened to her young daughter. Not a bad story with the usual good art, but this one-off story ends predictably. (ATB) 7

Planetary 10

by Ellis & Cassaday; WildStorm

<=> A moment please, to consider the cover. Warren Ellis once remarked that comics covers were ugly. All the more poignant then that Planetary #10 has one of the most striking cover images I have ever seen. It is simply breathtaking in its form and conception. And behind this strikingly perfect image lies an entertaining and witty tale of an alternate Superman, Green Lantern and Wonder Woman. Planetary succeeds because Ellis is not afraid to let his main characters take second stage to the sound bites of reworked comics history that make up his fictional universe. You read Planetary and you realise just how bad Marvel's What If...? stories were in comparison. John Cassaday's art alone is worth a 10. (RN) 8

Preacher 63

by Ennis & Dillon; Vertigo

<-> Jesse risks losing Tulip again and says goodbye to the ghost of John Wayne (a plot element which has never moved beyond its Elvis in *True Romance* beginnings). And taking Herr Starr's humiliation to the point where he gets inky circles round his eyes finally stretches that joke till it snaps. The creative team needs to pull something pretty special out of the bag to stop this book being one huge anticlimax! (RH) 6

<-> Jesse fears for Tulip's safety in the inevitable confrontation with the Grail. Garth Ennis has very slowly moved this storyline along, so far somewhat disappointing, which is unusual for him. This issue adds very little to the mix, the last five pages being the most impressive in a relatively uninspired issue. However, the art and characterisation of this classic title is as consistent as ever. (LJN) 6

The Sandman Presents: Petrefax 4

by Carey & Leialoha; Vertigo

<++> A major revelation saves Petrefax from being killed by Bal Cyphyro and with the colouring being better than previous issues, this mini-series ends with an excellent finale. (ATB) 8

Silver Age 1

by Waid & T. Dodson + R. Dodson

A select group of supervillains becomes more powerful than usual when the alien Agamemno swaps their bodies with the JLA, in the first stage of Agamemno's plan to become ruler of the Universe. A competently written issue, but the art suffers in comparison to the Brian Bolland cover. (ATB) 7

The JLA's bodies are switched with those of their enemies, leaving the bad guys free to get up to all sorts of mayhem. Writer Mark Waid successfully captures the naivety of the Silver Age in both storyline and dialogue without making the book too old fashioned. Terry and Rachel Dodson's art is always pleasant to look at, and they do not disappoint here. 7

Silver Age: Challengers of the Unknown 1

by Kesel & Johnson + Elliott

Stuck in the body of Chronos, Ray Palmer hopes that a time pool will help to reverse what has happened to him and his team-mates, but he is hindered by a confrontation with the Challengers. Despite the rushed ending, this is a nice, lively read, although the script is more appealing than the art. (ATB) 7

Silver Age: Dial H for Hero 1

by Waid & Kitson

It is impossible for the Martian Manhunter to convince the public that a body swap has occurred between the JLA and a group of well-known rogues. So it is easy for anyone to trust villains such as Felix Faust (in the body of Green Arrow) and Sinestro (in the body of Hal Jordan). When the Martian Manhunter (whose body has been swapped with that of Dr Light) appears to attack a military complex, he meets resistance in the form of various superheroes, all being the same person who has a very special dial that allows this to happen. Mark Waid delivers a near-perfect script, except for a hologram of Superman being able to throw a tank! Barry Kitson is not at his best here, but on the whole, this is an enjoyable read with a nice ending. (ATB) 6

Silver Age: Doom Patrol 1

by Peyer & Bachan + Kryssing

Superman, in Lex Luthor's body, tricks the original Doom Patrol into finding Luthor's cache of superweapons. The writing is spot on, capturing both the wacky Silver Age style and the tensions within the DP. Unfortunately the artwork is so remarkably crude it lets the whole thing down. While the script is worth a 7, the art is at best a worth a 2. (MK) 5

Silver Age: Justice League of America 1

by Millar & Kolins + Panosian

Nothing can stop the supervillains in helping Agamemno find two of the three artifacts needed to construct the Doomsday weapon. Mark Millar writes a great issue with good art. (ATB) 8

The villains run amok in the JLA's bodies, which means Mark Millar has a lot of fun making the JLA do nasty things, and the reader hoping for anything resembling a Silver Age comic is disappointed, perhaps even appalled at the blatantly perverse characterisation accorded to the villains. The scratchy art doesn't help. (MK) 1

Silver Age: Teen Titans 1

by Wolfman & Oliffe + Hennessy

With Marv Wolfman competently reprising a 1970s Teen Titans plot about teenage mind control and Pat Oliffe's art almost resembling Bill Draut's TT work, this is one of the best of the *Silver Age* comics so far. However, Nick Cardy's typically quiet but imaginative cover layout makes me wish he'd drawn the insides too! (MK) 6

The Spirit 1 Millennium Edition

by Eisner

Over half a century later, this reprint stands up surprisingly well. These six short wisecracking detective stories clearly demonstrate why masked men in smart suits win out over men in capes and tights any time. Fans of Greyshirt in Tomorrow Stories should pick up Will Eisner's original. (RW) 7

Starman 67

by Robinson & Snejberg

<+> Good things come in small packages, but here in the twisted pages of Starman we see that sheer despicable villainy takes the diminutive dwarflike form of the insidious Culp. As time runs out for Opal City the stage is set for a ragtag band of third string heroes to save the day, and the story is all the more tense for it. (RN) 8

Steampunk 3

by Kelly & Bachalo + Friend; Cliffhanger

<+++> Cole Blaquesmith gives himself up to Faust, which surprises and angers Victoria, and Absinthe helps Cole to remember more about his past. This issue is unexpectedly easy to follow due to better storytelling. (ATB) 6

<--> It's hard to say whether Joe Kelly's plotting or dialogue is worse, and to single one out would be to unduly praise the other. The comic is supposed to portray a hellish dystopia, but Chris Bachalo's art is far too cutesy for this, producing a rather camp effect. (DM) 3

Superboy 75

by Kesel & Grummett + Champagne

<+> Superboy tries to cope with life without his powers and gets a taste of mortal life. Not a great issue, but smoothly scripted with pleasant art. (ATB) 6

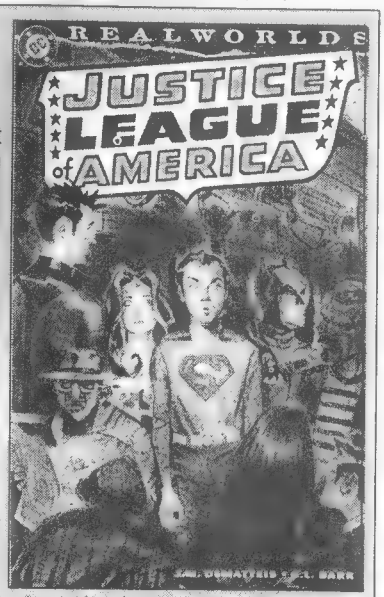
Supergirl 44

by David & Kirk + Riggs

<-> Linda finds it very difficult to cope with a huge gathering of her worshippers, especially when she has to confront someone who thinks that she is an agent of the Devil. No other ongoing monthly

Realworlds: JLA

by DeMatteis & Barr; Realworlds



A group of childhood friends who played at being superheroes reunite and discover the positive influence that the JLA characters had on their lives. The J. M. DeMatteis characterisation is great, creating flawed, real life equivalents of the familiar heroes. Glenn Barr's artwork is both dreamy and realistic. (SH) 8

A teacher, a comedian, a lawyer and a TV producer are reunited by someone they knew in their childhood and end up still feeling young enough to indulge in super-hero fantasies. J. M. DeMatteis creates a feeling of optimism among the characters which does not look as effective as his work on Vertigo's Mercy. Glenn Barr provides wonderful illustrations for this prestige format one-shot. (ATB) 6

The *Realworlds* imprint lands sunny side up again with this touching tale of five adults who used to play at being the Justice League of America when they were 12. J. M. DeMatteis is often prone to writing overly sentimental stories, and indeed the ending goes a little too far in that direction, but overall he has reigned himself in this time to produce a strongly emotive tale that will probably remind you of your own childhood. (RN) 8

within the Superman family would go anywhere near the territory this series has entered and although the art is not quite as good as last issue, Peter David is still on terrific form here. (ATB) 8

Superman Adventures 44

by Michelinie & Amancio

<-> The Commander hypnotises everyone watching his TV broadcast and makes them want to kill Superman. Not an original idea, but this is still an enjoyable read with Aluir Amancio drawing a very curvaceous Lois Lane. (ATB) 6

Superman/Gen[13] 1

by Hughes & Bermejo + Nyberg; WildStorm

The Gen[13] team is on a field trip to Metropolis and an accident with Superman leaves Fairchild unconscious. When she wakes up with the Man of Steel's cape draped over her, suffering from memory loss, she thinks that the cape means she is the Girl of Steel. Such logic makes the idea behind Clark Kent's glasses look quite plausible! A fun read neverless, with excellent inking by John Nyberg. (ATB) 7

Swamp Thing 3

by Vaughan & Petersen + Rubinstein; Vertigo

<-> A would-be writer enforces his ideas on reality, which involves the elimination of Tefe. This is a cleverly-written issue, but Brian Vaughan should have avoided the hackneyed ending here (where Tefe thinks about whether she exists in someone else's story) and the pencil artwork is a real disappointment. (ATB) 7

The Titans 16

by Grayson & Buckingham + Alquiza

<+> It appears that the Gargoyle has mentally induced the arguments that have occurred between the Titans team members on their camping trip and he has all of them trapped in a youthful limbo. This plot twist is not a great improvement on the first part of this story, but Mark Buckingham provides good pencilling for his last issue as series artist. (ATB) 6

Tom Strong 8

by Moore & Sprouse + Gordon + Weiss; ABC

<-> Sadly this series is descending into silliness and isn't helped by the new three-stories-an-issue format. Chris Sprouse produces pleasant enough art, but the side is let down by Alan Moore not writing something longer. He managed to produce this style of material for Supreme, so why not here? (RW) 5

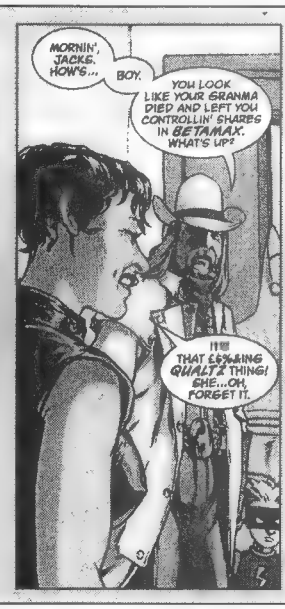
Transmetropolitan 34

by Ellis & Robertson + Ramos; Vertigo

<+> It's mean on the streets and never more so than when Spider Jerusalem is walking the pavement. We're beginning to see a more savage side to our favourite journalist and realising that maybe he isn't the wacky freak that Warren Ellis has made him out to be. Or as Spider puts it on page 15: "You've never met *me* before." (RN) 7
<+> Spider digs up dirt about the new president and his cohorts. There's the usual quota of funny moments, but this issue concentrates on moving the plot along, and is all the better for it. The art is, as ever, packed with detail and wonderfully coloured. And there's a dead puppy... (CS) 8

Top Ten 8

by Moore & Ha + Cannon; ABC


MORNIN', JACKS. HOW'S...
BOY.
YOU LOOK LIKE YOUR GRANMA DIED AND LEFT YOU CONTROLLIN' SHARES IN BETAMAX. WHAT'S UP?
!!!! THAT C#%&ING QUALITY THING! SHE...OH, FORGET IT.

<--> An uninspiring teleporter accident (an idea used in 2000 AD's *Mercy Heights)* is added to the current storylines. While the Graczik/Gromolko investigation continues, Libra fills Jackie's mind with a perverse image. In contrast to the unoriginal, and disappointing ending, the artwork does not let the reader down. (ATB) 6
<=> Top Ten tugs at your heart strings this month as we witness the dying moments of two individuals caught in a bizarre teleportation accident. Alan Moore can turn his hand to most things, but simple human emotions – as shown here – he does especially well. (RN) 7
<-> A low-key issue in which none of the previous plot strands progress whatsoever. Instead, the main events centre around the death bed conversations of two bystanders fused together after a teleportation accident. Strangely moving, actually. As ever, Gene Ha's eye-straining background details guarantee your money's worth. (RW) 7

WildCATS 11

by Casey & Phillips; WildStorm

<=> Grifter is hired for a strange assignment, ex-team member Maxine Manchester returns, and Spartan becomes the new WildCATS leader. An entertaining, though rather lightweight issue featuring some neat characterisation, crisp dialogue and dry humour. However, the talented creative team might struggle to retain readers disillusioned over last year's erratic relaunch. (JE) 7

Wonder Woman 156

by Luke & Clark + Simmons

<++> Devastation uses her illusory abilities to trick Diana and Artemis, in order to get Cassie. Neither Eric Luke nor Matthew Clark are at their best, but this is still a pretty good issue. (ATB) 6

Yeah! 9

by Bagge & Hernandez; Homage

<+> Alien girl group !haeY come to Earth, stealing both Yeah!'s songs and fame. The conclusion of a disappointing but sometimes fun series. However Peter Bagge's use of a narrative voice throughout has been annoying and often patronising. Was this $2.95(!) title ever bought by the kids it was aimed at? (RW) 5

Image Comics

City of Silence 1

by Ellis & Erskine + D'Israeli

Stealth is a futuristic city where technological innovations have gone out of control, so such ideas are usually silenced by a very strange-looking secret police force. An intriguing weird read with good artwork. (ATB) 7
A team of Silencers investigates a bizarre new technology in a morally bankrupt future city. Warren Ellis explores similar themes to those in his other comics, but this is sufficiently different to make it interesting. But Gary Erskine's confident linework is spoiled somewhat by D'Israeli's flat and lifeless colouring. (CS) 6

F5 #1

by Daniel & Daniel + Bonk + Marlo

Ignore the T&A art and a dreadfully stereotyped Australian character and enjoy the action. Team 1 leader Penny narrates two tales of F5 engaged in their secret strike force activities. The inclusion of two F5 teams creates a welcome tension to distract from any shortcomings. (LN) 6

Fear Effect 1

by Wohl & Boller + various; Top Cow/Eidos/Kronos

Mercenary Hana and her team are hired for a bizarre mission. Like Top Cow's Tomb Raider, this is another schizophrenic videogame spin-off that seems unsure whether it's primarily being written for children or older readers. Maybe the terse script is influenced by Batman: The Animated Series, but – despite David Boller's dynamic pseudo-manga artwork – overall it creates a peculiar effort. (JE) 5

J.U.D.G.E. #2

by Horn

<-> John Laus comes up with depraved ways of treating captives, even after they are dead. Victoria leads a direct attack on his mansion, with her team feeling less confident than before. An OK issue with some spectacular visuals, but the art doesn't quite look as effective as in the first issue. (ATB) 5

Kin 3

by Frank; Top Cow

<=> Bob explains to Elly how his bullet wound was healed and they get through the S.I.A. soldiers in order to reach the covenant, while Elly's father is concerned about her welfare. As well as the usual good art, Gary Frank also provides a shocking end to this issue. (ATB) 7

Powers 1

by Bendis & Oeming

<=> With Brian Michael Bendis's star about to go stratospheric, now's the time to get on board with his latest Image creation – *NYPD Blue* in a world full of superheroes. Cracking dialogue – some of the best you'll ever read in comics – and art that mixes *Batman Beyond* with a noirish, almost Mazzuchelli-like grittiness. (RH) 9
Detective Walker is lumbered with an inquisitive child, a new partner and a superhero slaying in an impressive debut issue. It takes a while to get with the characters and the initially overwhelming pulp style, but the ending leaves you wishing it had been a double-sized opener. (LN) 7

Rising Stars 7

by Straczynski & Zanier; Top Cow

<+> The Specials are rounded up as the so-called conspiracy becomes public outcry. Well written and presented in a style that adds to the suspense, J Michael Straczynski's work is top draw and the art of Christian Zanier is a vast improvement on his recent work on Dark Horse's Angel title. (LJN) 8

Savage Dragon 73

by Larsen; Highbrow

<=> Savage Dragon and the new Mighty Man finally infiltrate the Covenant of the Sword, where they find former allies are now sworn enemies. Featuring somewhat restless storytelling, brash visuals and convoluted continuity, reading this energetic series is akin to being hit over the head with a crowbar – only more fun. (JE) 7

ShockRockets 2

by Busiek & Immonen + von Grawbadger; Gorilla

<++> Despite a poor performance in his training session and feeling isolated from the rest of the team, Alejandro shows enough talent to become one of the ShockRockets. Along with the excellent art, the script reveals more interesting details than the first issue. (ATB) 8

Spawn 95

by McFarlane + Holguin & Capullo + Miki; Todd McFarlane Productions

<-> Spawn prepares for battle as two demons arrive on Earth to herald the Apocalypse. The abruptly scene-changing final page spoils the flow of an otherwise solid script that displays some effective humour. (JE) 8

Tomb Raider 5

by Jurgens & Park + Sibal; Top Cow

<=> An invitation to an archaeological dig leads Lara and her ex-lover, Chase, to the discovery of a prehistoric world. Run-of-the-mill adventuring and bloody diabolical

dialogue are offset by top visuals. Strictly for a pre-teen audience. (JE) 7

Marvel Comics

Amazing Spider-Man 18

by Mackie & Byrne + Romita Sr

<=> And so John Byrne bows out, leaving Spider-Man a tattered shadow of his former self. It's not that Peter is alone, destitute, even robbed of his costume... It's more that his character has been reduced to one-dimensional, his adventures hollow and flat, lacking excitement, humour, or even a cohesive structure. Dragging John Romita Sr in to ink this mess is an insult to a legendary artist. (RH) 2

Daredevil 12

by Quesada + Palmiotti & Haynes + Self; Marvel Knights

<---> Three inner-city storylines are connected in a fairly clever way, but they have a very tenuous link to the confrontation between Daredevil and Echo, which makes this a poorly-timed standalone. Rob Haynes doesn't create the dynamic visuals this series really needs. (ATB) 4
<--> So here we are, well and truly cliffhanging. Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti write a fairly typical fill-in meditation on the nature of Hell's Kitchen. Far from typical however are the muted colours David Self has applied to Rob Haynes's snapshot drawings. Beautiful, but not a good enough reason to buy. (JG) 5
<-> A fill-in issue in the middle of David Mack's tense nail-biter, this begs the question of "why bother?". The art is nice, but too often relies on large images and splash pages, while the story offers nothing new, but nothing too bad either. However, this is just filling in the ever-widening gaps in publication. (RH) 6
<-> Things must be looking bad in deadline land if a fill-in issue is already required after so many delays, but as fill-in issues go this is good. Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti freeze one moment in time, as Maya's finger tightens on the trigger of her gun, to show the implications of the last few minutes of roof-top combat on the lives of several people in Hell's Kitchen. Well, it beats having Stan Lee telling us how lucky we are to see a reprint of the first time Daredevil met Spider Man... (RN) 6

Generation X #65

by Ellis + Wood & Pugh + Florea

<+> Sean Cassidy raises a few important points when he listens to how Jubilee, Paige and the others plan their attack on the House of Correction. While the art keeps improving, the writing duo is concentrating more on characterisation than plot, making nearly everything predictable. (ATB) 6

Incredible Hulk 15

by Jenkins & Garney + Buscema

<=> General Ryder comes face to face with the Hulk, who uses his old Joe Fixit persona to get him and Angela out of trouble. A good read with much better artwork than usual. (ATB) 7

Iron Man 30

by Quesada & Chen + Hunter

<-> Excellent art from Sean Chen, but the showdown between Tony Stark (reduced to just homemade weapons and his wits) and his psychotic, self-aware armour is marred by a cop-out ending. However, Joe Quesada's writing shows enough promise and inventiveness to maintain an element of surprise. (AK) 7

Marvels Comics: Fantastic Four 1

by Kesel & Smith

Story of Marvel's famous foursome as told by the FF, done in a style similar to the comics of the '60s. Marvel seems to be unable to produce quality material when doing something from a different angle and this venture into comics produced in the Marvel universe proves it. A poor story that doesn't flow and is dull and unoriginal! (LJN) 2

Marvels Comics: Spider-Man 1

by Grist & Hotz

Kane creator Paul Grist returns to Spidey (he wrote the hugely enjoyable Daily Bugle mini) for a flat revision of the legend with Spidey as a vampire-like monster with a strange connection to publisher T. T. Thomas. If this comic was published in the Marvel universe, J. Jonah Jameson would see them in court! Suitably creepy artwork from Kyle Hotz. (RH) 5

Marvels Comics: Thor 1

by Templeton & Aucoin + Wong

The story of Thor, told by comics creators inside the Marvel universe. They believe Thor and his family of gods are more likely to be a human family using hi-tech machinery and an alien power source. An interesting idea, but nothing more. Art is standard, and the story has little time to develop. Curiosity value only. (LJN) 4

Marvels Comics: X-Men 1

by Millar & Philips + Fegredo

Rather than be executed, a group of mutants is sent to retrieve a stolen eco-friendly nuke from Dr Strange and his mutant outlaws. Silly stuff, but Mark Millar delivers some good one liners. Sean Phillips and Duncan Fegredo's loose and at times awkward art probably won't appeal to the usual X-crowd. (RW) 6

Peter Parker, Spider-Man 18

by Mackie & Nolan + Hanna

<-> Without this book's only regular plus point (John Romita Jr's art), we really are left with little to admire. The supporting cast are again reduced to crude stereotypes

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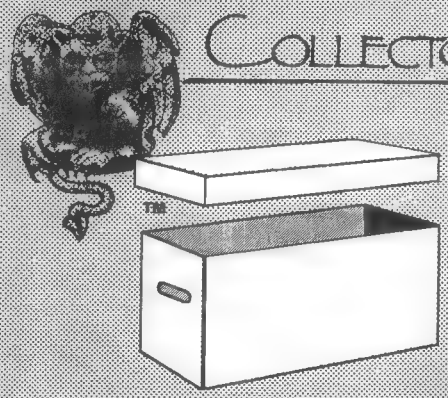

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(Flash Thompson reverts to High School knucklehead) and the latest Goblin falls very flat. While Graham Nolan drew a superior Batman, his Spidey is very patchy. (RH) 3

Punisher 4

by Ennis & Dillon + Palmiotti; Marvel Knights

<--> Despite bullet wounds, Frank Castle gets help from a few zoo animals in eliminating three of Ma Gnucci's men. Good visuals by Steve Dillon and Jimmy Palmiotti, but very disappointing after the previous issue. (ATB) 6

<--> An unarmed Punisher hands out some natural justice with a little help from the residents of Central Park Zoo and Detective Soap finds a new ally in his mission to trap our hero. Sadly these first-rate creators are doing nothing very interesting. (JG) 6

Thunderbolts 39

by Nicieza & Bagley + Hanna

<+> 100 page issue that includes reprints of stories from the Thunderbolts' past. The main storyline continues the tradition of ending on a knife edge and asking more questions than answering. The latest Baron Zemo is killed off in another action-packed issue, in what we have come to expect from this title. Art, story and characters continue to impress. (LJN) 7

Webspinners 18

by DeFalco & Frenz + McLeod

<=> Lightweight but mostly fun conclusion to this flashback tale featuring interesting character bits with Beetle (nudging him towards Thunderbolts) and the Sandman. The art is pretty basic, and sad continuity anoraks will note that Doc Ock is misrepresented at this particular point in Spidey history. (RH) 6

US Indies

The Blair Witch Chronicles 2

by Van Meter & Mireault; Oni Press

<+> The townspeople of Burkittsville tell a mixed story of a family who in some way offended the Blair Witch back in 1911. Jen Van Meter presents this story in a shocking style that leaves you wondering which angle of the events, if any, were what actually happened to this unfortunate family. The impressive cover introduces you to a spooky tale. (LJN) 7

Blue Monday 1

by Clugston-Major; Oni Press

Teenage schoolgirl Bleu desperately tries to win tickets to an Adam Ant concert while falling in love with the school's new substitute teacher in this highly entertaining and very funny new book. Chynna Clugston-Major has a very professional manga style and a wicked line in observational humour. (AK) 7

Cerebus 254

by Sim & Gerhard; Aardvark Vanaheim

<=> Creator Dave Sim continues to indulge his obsession with investigating his literary heroes. The art is wonderfully detailed, and Sim views his characters from a personal but authoritative perspective. This isn't an exciting comic, but it does have near-perfect characterisation, and Sim's lettering is inspired and brilliant. (CS) 7

Com.X Issue #0

by various; Com.X

As Image stops doing mindless, flashy superheroics, the Brits jump on the bandwagon. Actually, this isn't bad – the art on all four stories is excellent and the writing has its tongue stuck firmly in its cheek. *Bazooka Jules* and the *XII O-Clock Man* work especially well. (AK) 6

Image meets Vertigo, UK style. Probably the slickest launch package this country has ever seen, Com.X Issue #0 is an amazing appetiser. Let's just hope the main course has a little more meat! Four new strips are previewed, each stylistically worlds apart, each intended to launch in their own titles soon. (TM) 7

The Tank Girl fan in me loved *Bazooka Jules*; my Vertigo tastes were whetted by *Puncture*; *Heavy Plant* is Play Station's KKND *Krossfire* in print and *XII O-Clock Man* is Punisher meets Deathlok with style. Excellent visuals, can't wait for the story. (AO) 8

The art is stylised. The packaging is nice, despite the lettering getting out of hand. The stories, however, are no more than pointless fight scenes, with some vague attempts at wit. You learn nothing about these characters, nor sadly does it whip up a frenzy for the forthcoming series. And don't even get started on Bazooka Jules... (RW) 4

Charm School: Magical Witch Girl Bunny 1

by Watasin; Slave Labor Graphics

Elizabeth Watasin has a clean, simple art style similar to a fluffier, fantasy-based Jaime Hernandez (but she obviously doesn't like drawing backgrounds!). Her storytelling is very lightweight however, as she tells the tale of Bunny the Witch's complicated and alternative love life. This book has cult hit written all over it. (AK) 6

Witch, faerie and vampire in teenage lesbian love triangle! Not a headline from The Sun, but a new series from Elizabeth Watasin. A painfully short episode especially as life at Haunted High School looked so interesting. Despite being confused by speech balloon placement, this has a certain charm. (RW) 5

Dork Tower 9

by Kovalic; Corsair Publishing

<+> John Kovalic's gentle satire of the worlds of comic fandom and role playing continues, this time giving the Pokemon craze a good ribbing. Drawn in a bold and attractive cartoon style, Dork Tower is witty and knowing but never too sarcastic, showing the creator's love for his subject material. (CS) 7

From the Desk of...

by Ellis; Avatar

Pages full of words? With hardly any pictures? I tell you, it'll never catch on... This slim volume collects a series of articles that originally appeared on the Internet. Often funny, acutely sharp, and sometimes even informative, Warren Ellis writes well as a columnist, especially when he isn't trying to be a real life Spider Jerusalem. Shame about the T&A adverts in the back. (RN) 7

Gatecrasher 3

by Waid + Palmiotti & Conner + Palmiotti; Black Bull Entertainment

<-> Now that ThinkTank has been destroyed, it makes it much harder for the Split-Second Squad to look for the Rat of the Apocalypse, a creature who has not only found Alec, but has probably made it more difficult for him to save his relationship with Mia. The most interesting aspect of the story is the effect of the ThinkTank's liquid contents on Alec, in an issue which is smoothly pencilled by Amanda Conner. (ATB) 6

Liberty Meadows 10

by Cho; Insight Studios

<=> This issue Frank Cho goes on a blind date with hilarious consequences! Actually, this is more of a cute feel-good comic than a funny one. In fact among the 49 newspaper strips reprinted here, the facial expressions of Liberty Meadows' animal residents are far more amusing than the actual punch lines. (RW) 5

Radio: An Illustrated Guide

by Abel; Fantagraphics

How the radio programme This American Life (aired on WBEZ) is put together may, on the face of it, have little interest for UK readers. The excellent Jessica Abel does her best to keep things lively, but is hampered by Ira Glass's text-heavy script. Even so, this is a surprisingly interesting title. (RW) 5

Aus Indies

Bacchus 51

by Campbell; Eddie Campbell Comics

<+> This has improved since the title character no longer appears. Instead Eddie Campbell treats us to new auto-biographical material and reprints of early '80s gems. How long he can keep dragging this out remains to be seen. But why does he keep publishing Michael Evans' bloody awful stuff? (RW) 6

Euro Indies

40 Days Dans le Desert B

by Moebius; Stardom

At first glance, this appears to be seventy beautiful Moebius illustrations. But there does seem to be a bizarre (religious?) narrative of a man sitting in an ever-changing desert. However you can't help feeling you've seen Moebius do it all before, from the line work to his recurring trademark motifs. (RW) 7

UK Titles

2000AD 1193

by various; Egmont Fleetway

<-> This issue contains two well-written Judge Dredd thrills, one of them featuring two undercover judges trying to expose a protection racket within a Mega-City block (with poor artwork by Jock) and the other being the decently-illustrated second part of *Copycat Crimes. Mission to Mangapore* continues with a confrontation between Sinister Dexter and Polly Alloy. Dan Abnett provides some good dialogue for a story with no great surprises, while the art is as good as ever. The third *Tale of Telguuth* is enhanced by some gorgeously painted background scenery by Siku, but suffers from a lame ending. It's Slaine versus his supernatural replicant in *The Secret Commonwealth*, where a dull script is made worse by David Bircham's ugly – and sometimes unclear – artwork. (ATB) 4

<=> Two Judge Dredd stories this issue, as he investigates the Mafia and stops a criminal cloning himself. Meanwhile, Sinister Dexter get into a fight and Slaine hits people with his axe – business as usual, then, with *Tales of Telguuth* providing *Future Shock*-style plot twists. All round, another quality issue. (CS) 7

Judge Dredd Megazine 66

by various; Egmont Fleetway

<--> Judge Dredd nearly brings Jiggs back to Mega-City One, but he gets too close to a highly concentrated amount of the addictive Umpty candy in *Dead Ringer*. John Wagner delivers the usual classy script and although Wayne Reynolds is the third artist to work on this story, he produces decent illustrations here. Armitage continues his investigation regarding the missing corpses in *Bodies of Evidence*, where Dave Stone writes an interesting but

disjointed script with pleasant art by Steve Yeowell. Johnny Alpha and friends get away from the Horsemen of the Apocalypse in an excellent Strontium Dog story, but they then find out why their next destination, the Second City of Hell, is called Hate. (ATB) 6

<=> John Wagner's wonderful nostalgia trip leads Dredd to an entire planet addicted to Umpty candy. The art style may be unexciting, but Wayne Reynolds gets the story across well. The reprint of Strontium Dog's journey through hell, also written by Wagner, does seem a bit dated now. But Carlos Ezquerra's page layouts and storytelling abilities should perhaps be studied by today's new talent. *Armitage* is the weakest link here. Just how much more corrupt can the Britcit Justice Department get? And Steve Yeowell's artwork is marred by dodgy reproduction. (RW) 6

UK Indies

Jack Staff 1

by Grist; Dancing Elephant Press

Now this is going to be fun, Paul Grist has taken various strands of popular culture and weaved them together to form Jack Staff. "Britain's Greatest Hero" may be the title character, but the rest of the tapestry is no less intriguing. All the characters interact beautifully with each other in terms of both art and dialogue. (JG) 8

Becky Burdock, girl reporter, wants to know why British superhero Jack Staff vanished 20 years previous. Her editor, however, wants her to write about two murders by a vampire. But are the two connected? Paul Grist's take on superheroes is nothing new, but his sense of fun and flair for layouts make this worth following. (RW) 6

Kane 27

by Grist; Dancind Elephant Press

<-> A prototype combat outfit (K1RBY) stolen from the military; crime-lord Oscar Darke mumbling something about control; a hired killer singing songs from West Side Story and pretending to be blind. All this and more wrapped up in 43 pages of Paul Grist's exceptional artwork. (JG) 7

Smoke & Mirrors

by Gaiman; Headline Press

A surprisingly enjoyable collection of short strips, despite a large amount of self-indulgence appearing. This contains the prose originals of 'One Life...' and 'Only the End of the World Again'. Neil Gaiman is certainly right when he says that his take on Snow White leaves you unable to view the original in quite the same way. (RW) 7

Spiral Dreams

by Davidson; Slab-O-Concrete

Dreams and hallucinations usually make for dull self-indulgent material. But in this collection of strips and images, Al Davidson pulls it off with panache and an exciting spread of art styles. Mixed with Davidson's spirituality and lifelong disability, this is without doubt a truly fascinating, enlightening read. (RW) 7

Vermin

by Metaphrog; Metaphrog

An amusing mini-comic concerning a household's problem with mice. Nicely executed piece of work, marred slightly by the overuse of the mottled colouring effects. (RW) 6

UK Small Press

A Big Slice of Brain Cake

by Spicer;
£1.30 from C. Spicer,
80 Castle Road, Weddington,
Nuneaton CV10 0EW

Gary Larson's influence is well to the fore here, and Chris Spicer has a sharp enough line in wit to bring a succession of one-liner cartoons off very successfully. The art is a little on the loose side, but the two short strips demonstrate a fair grasp of pacing and dynamics. Overall, it shows a lot of promise. (MK) 6

Angel Nebula 5

by McGee;
75p from 143 Meldon Drive,
Bradley, Bilston WV14 8BE

Tony McGee's enigmatic sci-fi story reaches its conclusion. Frustratingly vague in places, yet beautifully evocative too. McGee handles relationships very well, and his art provides some nice facial expressions to go along with this. And there's a lot to be said for not answering all the questions. (RH) 7

Anti-Everything 1

by Bickley;
£1 from Mark Bickley,
136 Dyas Avenue, Great Barr,
Birmingham B42 1HF

Mark Bickley steps away from his usual heroic fare to take a light-hearted look at a group of young and disaffected friends. The subject matter is serious but is treated without gloom or navel-gazing, which tends to heighten its impact. Strong, very individual art, into which manga influences have been integrated well, makes this an attractive effort. (MK) 7

CAOF Presents... 16

by various;
£1 from S. Chebsey,
10 Cleveland Ave, High Ercall,
Telford, Shropshire TF6 6AH

<=> Marc Olivent's impressive strip *Hogwob* is this amateur anthology's highlight, boasting a distinctive style reminiscent of Mike Mignola and Italian artist Nicola Mari. Also of merit is Jake Howard's throwaway one-pager *Little Bastard.* (JE) 7

Galaxina and the Space Cadets 1

by Baker & Chandler;
75p from D. Chandler,
2 Brook Cottages, Brook Street,
Great Waldingfield, Sudbury,
Suffolk CO10 0RZ

As he's one of the better UK small press superhero artists around, I'd rather have seen Darren Chandler draw this on his own. Working over Dek Baker's layouts appears to have cramped his style somewhat. Still, this is a recommendable and funny superheroine outing, and yet more proof that Baker's Wargods Of Atlantis universe is expanding at a marvelous rate! (MK) 5

The Kaboom Review 4

by various; free from
www.thekaboomreview.port5.com
or thekaboomreview@hotmail.com

Available only via the Internet, this 16 page mature readers publication is a breath of fresh air – though not without some serious reservations. The comics and related media reviews are highly irreverent, occasionally funny and often resort to using very strong language. It's a hit and miss affair, however, and the huge potential here is wasted through a lack of focus, self-destructive excess and some dull page design. (JE) 6

The perpetrators of this are anonymous which is probably a wise move because it's about as scurrilous and filthy as comics fanzines get, and anyone under 18 shouldn't even think about ordering it. Adults who think Viz is for pre-schoolers might like it, though. As well as being frighteningly rude it is literate, well made and rather funny. (MK) 7

The O Men #7

by Eden;
£1.50 from Martin Eden,
160a Buckingham Palace Road,
Victoria, London SW1 9TR

<=> More than just a day in the life story, this issue adds further depth to the large cast, plus offers some intriguing (and sinister) hints of what's to come. Playing down the superhero angle until it's almost a whisper, Martin Eden instead chooses to push his characters in unexpected dramatic directions. Better than 75% of the professional superhero comics currently available. (RH) 8

<=> The 'day off' issue following the extended introductory epic has become something of a comicbook cliche over the last 20 years, but Martin Eden manages to make something new of it by using jump cuts and the passage of time very imaginatively. This issue confirms the title's status as one of the best small press superhero books around. (MK) 8

The Plot Thickens 2

by Burrows + various;
£2.00 from Slab-O-Concrete,
PO Box 148, Hove, BN3 3DQ

More slashingly sarcastic stories from Gavin Burrows and his pencil-wielding partners in crime. The music business is the main target here, but the comics industry and mobile phones receive a good bashing too. Colin Brown's excellent and quite individual artwork stands out, and the usual classy Slab-O-Concrete packaging rounds off a satisfyingly sneaky selection. (MK) 8

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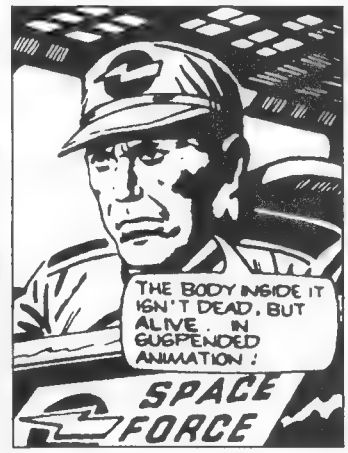


End of Action Force

Mark Frostick via e-mail:
markfrostick@kingsturge.co.uk

Q THE FIRST comic I collected was the classic **Battle Action Force**. However, one year I returned from holiday and it featured *Storm Force* instead of *Action Force*. I didn't find out why.

The last story I remember was with the SAS trying to get somewhere with donkeys in the Middle East(!). I believe its title was *Operation Stubborn*.

Any idea of what happened at the end of the story, or why the comic changed (my guess is loss of copyright or something similar)? And how did they tell the readers?

A *We take it that you're referring to Fleetway/IPC's* ***Battle Picture Weekly*** *alias* ***Battle Action Force*** *alias* ***Battle Action****.*

Launched in 1975 as ***Battle Picture Weekly****, it became* ***Battle Action*** *two years later and began running tie-ins to the toy line of Action Force – Anglicised versions G.I. Joe – in 1983.*

The Action Force *stories ran until November 1986, replaced by* Storm Force *the following January. A year later, in 1988, the title folded into the relaunched* ***Eagle*** *although Storm Force didn't make the cut.*

As to why IPC/Fleetway replaced Action Force *with* Storm Force*, your guess was right. Marvel UK obtained the* Action Force *rights, launching its own title in early 1987.*

Marvel's ***Action Force*** *lasted only 50 issues before merging into* ***Transformers*** *in 1988. The title was incorporated into its new home with #153 and featured in* ***Transformers*** *until it too was cancelled – with 1991's #332.*

As to how Operation Stubborn *ended, any* ***Battle Action Force*** *readers out there with good memories?*

Incidentally, among artists contributing to the IPC/Fleetway series were Wolfie Smith's *Vanyo,* Geoff (Battler Britton) *Campion,* Store Wars' *Jim Watson and Ron* (Rick Random) *Turner* [art left]. *Early work by* ***2000 AD****'s* Zenith *team of Grant Morrison and Steve Yeowell can be seen on the* Masters of Kung Fu *strip in Marvel's* ***Action Force****.*

All about Firearm

Jamie Crowhurst via e-mail:
JPCrowhurst@rocketmail.com

Q CAN YOU please give me a complete history of the Firearm character created and written by James Robinson for Malibu before they were bought out by Marvel?

Do you know if Marvel still owns the right to the character and if Robinson has any plans to revive the series?

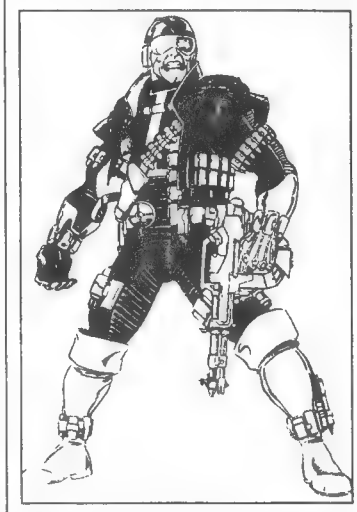
Also, could you tell me how to get hold of **Firearm** #0, which apparently came with a 30 minute VHS tape?

A *James Robinson introduced the character – the only non-superpowered hero in the Malibu pantheon – in 1993's* ***Firearm*** *#1. The title, regarded by many as the best Ultraverse series, lasted 18 issues and was later relaunched as* ***Codename: Firearm*** *scripted by Marv Wolfman and David Quinn.*

Both titles also had an issue #0, with – as you mention – ***Firearm*** *coming complete with a video cassette. An unlikely gimmick, it contained a live action story that was continued in the comicbook. The remarkable thing was that this pilot TV show for the comic was surprisingly good.*

Where to get a copy? Try advertising in the ***CI*** *Classifieds, but beware... Being a US release, the chances are the tape is SERIAL rather than PAL (the UK system) and – to be able to play it – you'd need an NTSC video, which could handle both US and British tapes.*

In addition to his own title, Firearm



ABOVE: The new Firearm, designed by George Perez for ***Codename: Firearm****.*

Viz to collect Dragon Ball Z?

Darryl Payne, 17 Gorsehill, Beacon Lough East Gateshead, Tyne & Wear NE9 6SE

Q DO YOU know if Akira Torimaya's **Dragon Ball Z** comics are available as trade paperbacks? If not, will they be in the future, especially if back issues are going to be scarce?

A *It's a pretty fair assumption that Viz will collect the Tokyo-based writer/artist's comics. The manga publisher has always been very good at keeping its most popular material in print, whether by multiple printings or in trade compilations and* **Dragon Ball Z** *is growing in popularity off the back of* **Pokemon**.

Viz has reprinted **Dragon Ball Z** *#1 at least eight times, putting in excess of 170,00 copies in circulation. That almost certainly puts the series in the popular category, so collected editions can't be too far off.*

Torimaya is best known in Japan for Dr Slump, *a manga serial that has inspired two TV series and several movies. He has also worked on designs for video games including* **Dragon Quest** *and* **Chrona Trigger**.

also appeared in **Break-Thru** *#2,* **The Pact** *#1 and* **Venom: Sinner Takes All** *#1 and 4 with his origin being revealed in* **Nightman** *#4.*

What the future holds for Robinson's creation is hard to tell. As we understand it, there is some dispute as to what rights Malibu bought from the creators of its Ultraverse characters and, thus, what rights Marvel obtained with its purchase of Malibu.

What price first Eagle annual?

Nicola Taylor via e-mail: **mtbob@x-stream.co.uk**

Q I AM writing to you in hope you can help me in finding out the price of a first edition **Eagle** Annual that my parents own.

I have looked through your website and have been unable to find anything to help me in my quest!

The book was given to my father in 1950. It is in fair condition. My parents are just curious of the price and are considering selling.

They have taken the book to be valued by a representative from Sotheby's, and they have recommended that the price would range a great deal – depending on the demand at the time from collectors (if that was the missing book from their collection).

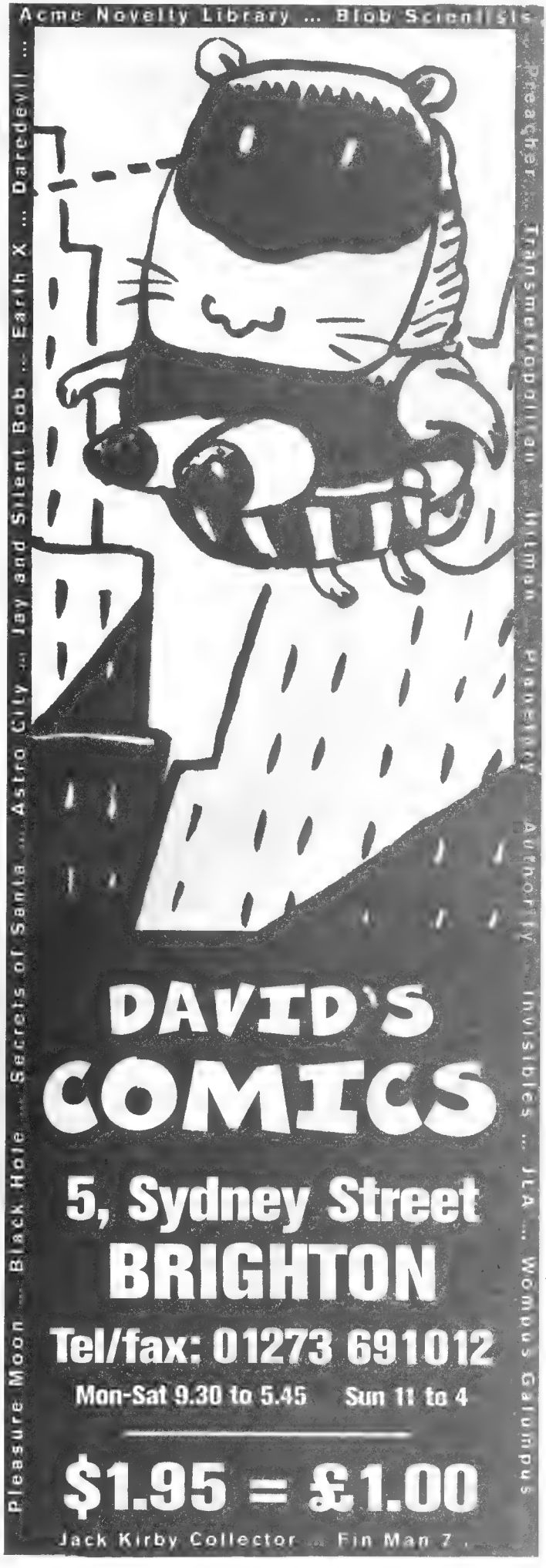
If you are unable to answer, could you please consider all of your contacts in order to help me?

A *Which just goes to show you shouldn't really waste your time with Southeby's. They didn't know, so they bluffed. Otherwise they would have told you the first* **Eagle Annual** *didn't appear until September 1951. The* **Eagle Book of Adventure Stories** *did, however, appear in late 1950. Could it be that?*

Also, the condition of the book plays a very important part in determining its value. Fair is a very low grade – just above poor – but we suspect you're using it as a layman's term. Even so, it is difficult for us to accurately value the book without seeing it.

Getting back to the point, **Eagle Annual** *1 is worth about three times what the* **Eagle Book of Adventure Stories** *would fetch.*

A Norfolk auction house recently offered the first three annuals as one lot which it anticipated would fetch between £20-30. On the other hand, a private seller recently offered 24 annuals from #1 to the 1975 edition (excluding 1974's) for in the region of £200 together. The somewhat outdated 1997-98 **Comic Book Price Guide** *indicates that a mint (perfect) condition copy of the first* **Eagle** *annual would be worth £45. Whichever way you view it, it is unlikely your parents are sitting on a fortune.*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Ultimate mistake

HATS off to Marvel's vice-president Bill Jemas for sanctioning the production of 12 million giveaway comics to promote the ambitious new Marvel Ultimates line.

In fact, Jemas said things at the launch's press conference that were quite unbelievable coming from a top Marvel executive. He believes the key to making Marvel's superhero comics line more accessible lies in re-inventing itself and eradicating 40 years of continuity.

This sounds like a radical approach, but he does believe there is no point in starting everything from scratch again – the existing titles have an almost independent life of their own now.

In an incredible (and hopefully not misquoted) remark, the Marvel New Media man said, "Our characters have been around for 40 years and most of the fans are older. The adventures have been building on one another for decades, so that it is impossible for a new reader to pick up one issue and understand what's going on."

Or has Marvel finally realised that its existing fan-base, the one that it and other comics publishers continually exploit, is actually made up of adults and not children.

Is this an admission the comics industry is suffering from the law of diminishing returns? The promotion campaign for Marvel Ultimates seems to prove this.

So-called "jumping on" points are always aimed at existing comics fans and it is doubtful that any potential outside new comics readers were ever made aware of the revamps or relaunches that have proliferated in recent years.

So this risky move of targeting a new and younger audience has to be applauded. But, and there always is a but, for all of this strong marketing how are they going to repay the new readers? By charging $2.25 for a standard issue and $2.99 for the launch issues of **Spider-Man** and **X-Men Ultimates**.

Surely if you want a new generation of comics fans you tempt them in with low prices (and then increase the price when the thing starts to work), not bludgeon them with a cover price that will scare them into finding another, cheaper, hobby or pastime.

Finally, does Jemas believe that viewers of the Saturday morning TV cartoon *X-Men* and *Spider-Man* series are also over 40?

These are kids. They don't buy Marvel titles because the stories don't interest them. Changing the characters doesn't fix the stories and only further confuses this potentially massive audience that likes the TV versions but not the comics.

Final Fantasy spin-off

IT SEEMS that Top Cow Productions' relationship with computer game designers is showing no sign of slowing down. The company still has its development deal with Eidos Entertainment, but is on the verge of branching out...

Final Fantasy is a computer game franchise with a long history: it has been transformed from a basic adventure role playing game into one of the most spectacular games of modern times and Top Cow is to produce a spin-off comic based on elements from the game.

Vagrant Story is still in the planning stages and Top Cow's Matt Hawkins is tight-lipped about the creative team (unusual for one of Image's imprints) but the rumour is the comic is likely to have some high profile talent connected to it.

Still just a rising star?

HE MIGHT be the en vogue comics writer, but in terms of making money for the companies he works for Warren Ellis is still some way short of rivalling the likes of Mark Waid, Chris Claremont or even Dan Jurgens as a top draw.

Just about everything Ellis does has the critics reaching for ever-greater superlatives. On the Internet, Ellis has elevated himself to the position of "Net God" (the name given to only the most respected of message posters) and he's even getting his own line of comic books.

But the man has yet to turn all of his following into a bonafide Top Ten hit (his fill-in stint on **Wolverine** not counting).

His much-hyped revamp of the lesser X-books saw all of them increase in sales by 25%, but by the second issues all but one (**X-Man**) had settled back to where they were before Ellis worked his magic.

Meanwhile **The Authority** hasn't suffered any loss in sales – still hovering around 30,000 – since Mark Millar replaced him.

There could be reluctance on the

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part of Marvel and DC to put the sometimes controversial writer on a top selling comic. Or Ellis, possibly elevated by his critical acclaim, maybe doesn't want to be associated with titles that are more corporate than writer controlled.

The new line of Ellis Image comics will go a long way to proving whether or not the Southend-based writer has cracked the toughest nut – credibility in sales.

Vertigo to vanish?

THERE is a general air of optimism beginning to emerge in the comics industry, but for one major company's mature readers imprint it might be too little too late.

Vertigo is in serious danger of becoming as marginal as DC's other alternative imprint, Paradox Press.

With the final issue of **Preacher** just a few weeks away, Vertigo will lose its last foothold on the Top 100. The two latest contenders for **Preacher**'s throne, **Swamp Thing** and **Lucifer** have had thoroughly disappointing debut sales and story content leaving editors wondering where to go next.

Preacher's conclusion will be definite, so there's little that DC execs can do in terms of prolonging its life the way they managed with Neil Gaiman's **The Sandman**.

Sandman apocrypha

ALLEGEDLY, DC's top money men were not at all happy about **The Sandman** concluding. When Neil Gaiman said he had a Sandman story that ran exactly for 43 issues, many of the editors didn't believe that the book had even 12 issues in it.

However, when the title began to show signs of becoming a success, it had a relaunch of sorts with #8 – the Death issue – which presumably took Gaiman back on course and away from superhero cameos.

When the *Seasons of the Mist* serial started, the book was doing far better than DC had ever have hoped. There were rumours that Gaiman would conclude the story at #50 (which of course would take into account the first seven issues, and fit into Gaiman's original 43-issue story plan).

By the time *Seasons of the Mist* concluded, Sandman was a hit. The monthly was selling in the 90,000 region and trade paperback collections were doing great guns. By the time the comic got into the 30s, DC had persuaded Gaiman to write more and a compromise was reached.

However, when **The Sandman** reached #63, DC execs knew that time was running out for Vertigo's only cash cow. There were meetings to try and work out how to retain Gaiman or a way of keeping **The Sandman** going with another writer. Vertigo editors fought tooth and nail on Gaiman's side and another compromise was reached. **The Sandman** concluded.

The Dreaming was designed to fill the void. Gaiman would do a number of specials, one-shots and other projects and everyone was happy. Well, all except the money men upstairs, who were only slightly appeased with the success of **Preacher** and now the same problem has arisen again.

Transmetropolitan is the obvious replacement for the top selling Vertigo slot, but it has so far failed. With sales less than 20,000 compared to **Preacher**'s 40,000, Warren Ellis's title needs to double its readership and his current

Meanwhile, at the X-Men offices...

Further controversy and change for the ubiquitous mutant teams. The latest rumours, gossip and speculation to arrive at Movers Central includes:

☒ SCOTT Lobdell is returning to his X-roots with a mini-series about a short-lived mutant who caught the imagination of many X-Men fans.

Lobdell and Joe Madureira introduced Blink in the multi-crossover *Phalanx Covenant* in 1996. In the story she died saving the soon-to-be Generation X team and fans have been clamouring for more ever since. Lobdell told *Movers*, "All four parts are written and will be illustrated by Dustin Nguyen – the amazing artist currently doing the *Jet* feature in **Gen-Actives**. Dustin and I go so far back, I knew him before he was Asian!"

The intention of the **Blink** mini is to bring back the character (or possibly an alternative reality version) into Marvel continuity.

Lobdell is also working on a project with humour artist Rurik Tyler called **Spat and Grovel** for the X-books.

☒ **Mutant X** is getting a new permanent penciller in the shape of former **Spider-Man** and **Batman** artist Tom Lyle.

"I'm thrilled to be working with Howard Mackie again. He has some very cool plans for the book," Lyle said. "I can't reveal any of them, but this is a very character- and action-oriented book and I want it to stay that way."

Lyle was named regular artist on **Mutant X**, beginning with #23. "This is my first regular gig in way too long. But the wait was worth it, because I like this book a lot," Lyle said. "I hope it shows in the final product."

☒ Chris Claremont might be about to assert his authority on the X-line by attracting back three high-profile '90s X-artists to produce work on the two core **X-Men** titles.

While it is unlikely that Jim Lee will be attracted back, rumour has it that Marc Silvestri, Art Adams and Chris Bachalo have all been approached with a view to producing alternate covers for **X-Men** and **Uncanny X-Men**.

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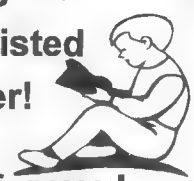

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One from the back issue boxes...

Static #1
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Artist: John Paul Leon
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Current UK Dealer Price: £0.50
Movers projected price: £2.50+

THE back issue market has its peaks and troughs, but it's rarely we get the chance to report on a cancelled book from a failed imprint which is now selling out fast.

DC's Milestone Comics, the duff brainchild of Dwayne McDuffie, could probably at best be described as a worthy effort to get ethnic groups reading comics with heroes that they could relate to.

One of the line's few highs was undoubtedly **Static**, which won plaudits from throughout the industry. Now with the success of the new animated series on Kids' Saturday Morning TV schedules, Milestone is returning with a four-issue series **Static Shock!: Rebirth of the Cool**. All new material, it is written by McDuffie and drawn by **Static**'s original artist, **Earth X**'s John Paul Leon. Now, as a result, back issues of a book that struggled to sell in 10p bins are now flying out of bewildered dealers' boxes. Expect a sudden price hike.

For years, shops and dealers have had Milestone comics in their basements, struggling to sell anything (even the **Worlds Collide** crossover with Superman was a dud!). If you see back issues of **Static** at cheap prices, it might be worth a small investment. At current prices, it won't break the bank!

popularity is only just starting to reflect in sales.

Lucifer looks likely to settle at around 15,000 – so it's not a contender. And **Swamp Thing** has been so poorly received it will be lucky to survive 12 issues.

So, is the writing on the wall for Vertigo? Perhaps it needs an influx of top talent? Or maybe it needs to re-invent itself for the 21st Century.

Epic makes no return

THERE have been a number of rumours circulating regarding the return of the Marvel's Epic imprint. This is despite a strong denial from Marvel's Bill Rosemann stipulating that the company has no intentions of bringing back any form of non-code approved imprint.

The rumour appears to have started as a result of news that Warren Ellis's abandoned **Satana** project is being finished by John Ostrander. The three-issue project has no release date and there are no plans to schedule it as yet. It is just being finished and presumably then will be placed on Marvel's inventory list.

With Vertigo struggling for DC, it is unlikely that Marvel will tip its toe into mature reader territory in the foreseeable future, but it won't hurt to have a completed project to help bump up the market share during the slack months of 2001.

Don't cry for me...

ONE WOULD think that a **Wolverine** graphic novel would be the perfect way to begin your US comics career.

For Enrique (**Alva Mayor**) Breccia, the Argentinean artist with a big reputation who's worked exclusively for Spanish-language publishers his entire career, this is a new direction and one that will hopefully last more than just this one-shot.

Marvel has finally hooked the artist after years of courting him at South American conventions. But he is only given a graphic novel set in a **What If...?** styled world.

Breccia has fans ranging from Will Eisner to Todd McFarlane, yet Marvel's first offer of work is on an over-priced spin-off from an X-book with sales dropping so fast it will probably face cancellation within the next six months!

While Breccia is sure to pick up a healthy page rate from the perfect bound special, he is unlikely to get any royalties. Commissioning editors should have thought about this when they signed up Breccia.

Unless **The Last Wolverine Story** is a phenomenal hit, the artist is likely to return to his lucrative superstardom in Latino comics.

Golden age revival?

A COUPLE of years ago, *Movers* reported on a planned DC revival of many of its Golden Age characters. After the return of the **JSA** this rumour appeared to blossom into a fully-fledged story. However, it now seems that there is a similar revival planned and DC is preparing to lure Kurt Busiek and George Perez from **The Avengers**.

The series is believed to involve heroes from DC's earliest days – Y2K revamps of back-up characters from such titles as **Action Comics**, **Adventure Comics**, **Detective Comics** and **World's Finest**.

Eat your heart out, Roy Thomas!

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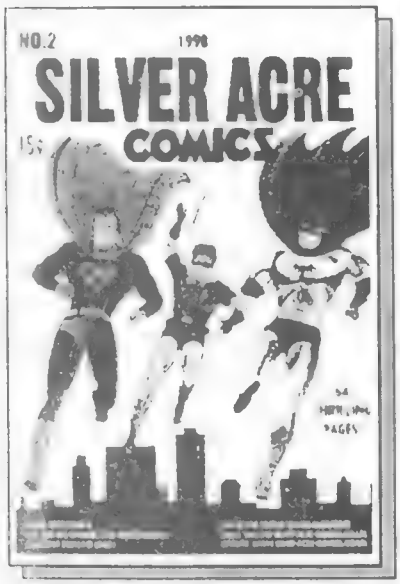

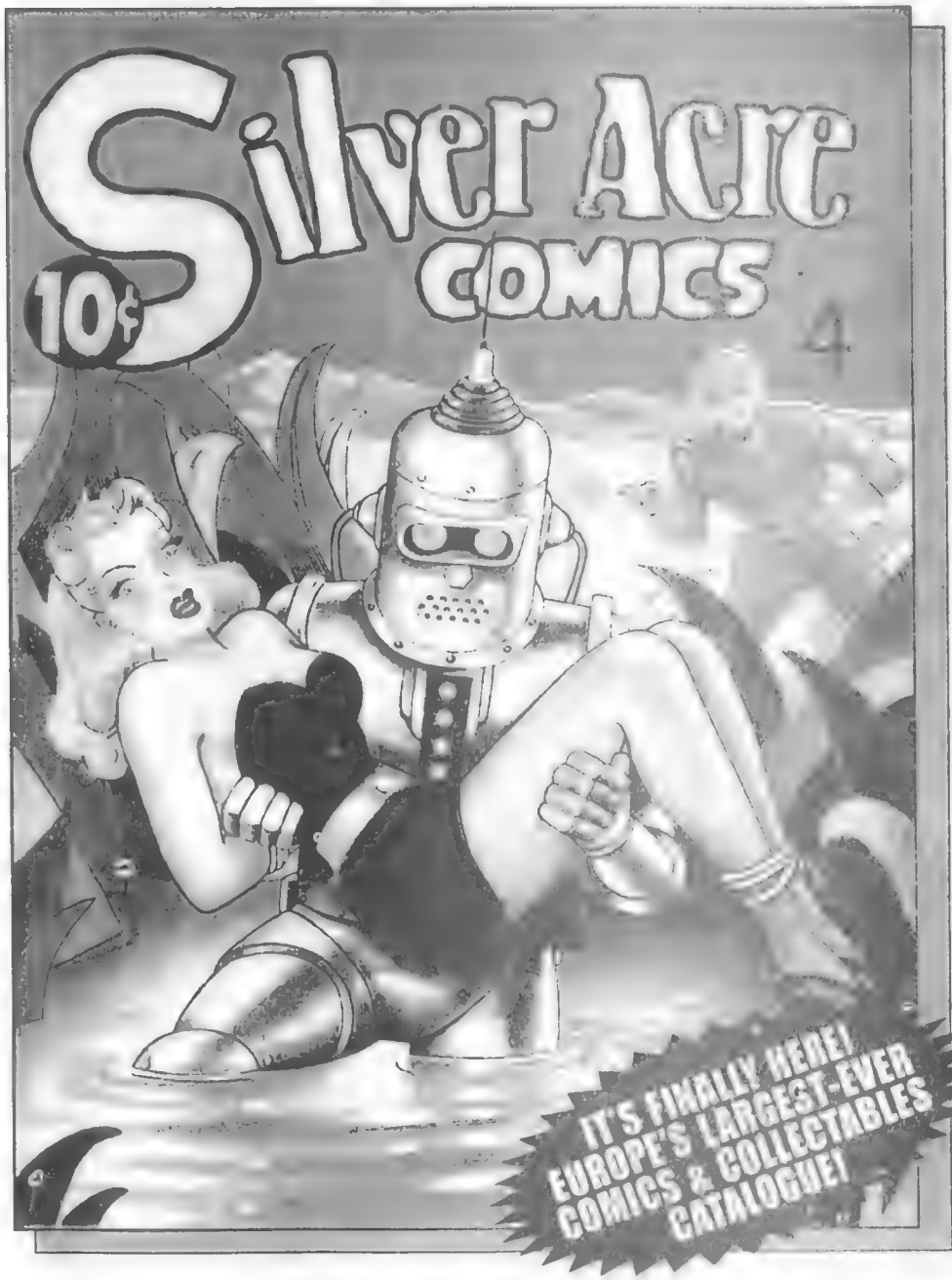

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LETTERS

Comics International, 8 Trinity Road, London N2 8JJ

It's Millar time

El Sloano, Edinburgh

BRING BACK Fabio P. Barbieri. Reading **CI**'s *Reviews* without his astute, non-fanboy drooling is getting unbearable!

I've read Mark Millar's first issue of **The Authority** and thought the writing was clumsy as well as the plot being another Alan Moore post-**Miracleman** #16 knock-off (ie superheroes deciding to right all of the world's ills). It was boring and tiresome to see the idea lifted wholesale in Grant Morrison's first four issues of **JLA**, never mind in **The Authority** by Millar! Can't you ditch the number of fanboy contributors to *Reviews?*

Aside from that, the news you ran that Frank Miller is returning to do a **Dark Knight Returns** sequel made my day.

If anybody did their best work on superheroes, it was Frank Miller. I'll be there to buy his latest.

While Marvel thinks our reviews are "the toughest in the business", Sloano, above, believes them to be fanboy drooling. Could this be a new debate in the making? ...Dez Skinn/editor

A Quality quickie

John Riley, Prague
via e-mail: **riley@terminal.cz**

RECEIVED my *Frank Miller Returns to Dark Knight* issue (**CI** #120) last Wednesday. My wife Katka actually thumped the cover with her finger and said, "Good cover. I like it."

I agree. Best cover you've had (but then how often do you get Frank Miller art for a cover? There is something to be said for the limited palate).

My only complaint is that I read it too quickly and have to wait practically the whole month between issues.

...That, and the *Sez Dez* column of course (can't you fire that guy?).

Further CI coverage

James Gibbs via e-mail:
jdgtcb@yahoo.co.uk

I JUST wanted to say that the Dark Knight cover to the latest issue (**CI** #120) with the title logo running up the side looked very good.

But, can you do something about the Diamond **Previews** back cover advertisement? It's somewhat lacking in design and topicality!

Squint and you may miss it, but the Diamond ad has been updated this issue. The latest cover look, prompted by the shape of Miller's Batman art, has had 100% approval. So it's taken up residence, unless you cry out for the return of the porthole look! ...Dez Skinn

Change or die!

Peter Sidebotham
3 Sandy Lane Mews
Hulme Walfield, Congleton
Cheshire CW12 2JJ

WELL it's been a while since I last put pen to paper concerning the future of comics, but it seems to me that now more than ever pounds and dollars govern what we can read, and will read!

As I've said before both Marvel and DC seem to be the worst (or best?) culprits for displaying this tactic. In other words, do we really need all these X-Men, Spider-Man, Batman and Superman titles?

Personally, I think that two is more than enough for any family! Most creativity at Marvel died the day that **Conan the Barbarian**, **Tomb of Dracula** and **Shang-Chi, Master of Kung Fu** bit the dust. Only their **Heroes for Hire** has caught my eye of late! DC at least seems willing to experiment with titles such as **Kingdom Come** and **JLA: Earth 2**!

Gone are the days of the corner shops' metal comic racks. Now only specialist shops stock US titles (somewhere at the back, I think!). I do believe that comics have to change, and embrace the new technology available today!

Cartoons may well become the new comics of the future, available to a mass audience via video or DVD (Batman, Superman, X-Men, *Reboot*, etc). For older fans like myself, compilation albums in hardback could feature new and old material, like the **Marvel Masterworks**, **DC Archives** and **Kingdom Come** books available now – but at affordable prices!

It would be a great shame if the old style comics were to disappear completely, but unless publishers change this policy of quantity over quality, they will be effectively kill the medium!

Good Prospects

Chris Ross
601 Park Ave, Apt #6
Prospect, Ohio 43342

I JUST read my first issue of your magazine, with Wolverine sporting the new black and yellow costume on its cover (**CI** #117).

I really liked your upbeat reviews and articles. I am a big Dredd fan and think both **Comics International** and the **Megazine** are cool.

The above, accompanied by a nifty Judge Popeye colour drawing, is only one of various letters, e-mails and even phone calls (hi, Greg Lea of Alabama, glad you also liked the Wolverine cover) we've received recently.

This has been reflected in our US sales, which have been rising each issue, with a 46% increase in the last six months! Which is nice. ...Dez

Sweets for my Swede

David Lloyd, Brighton
Co-Editor: **The Worm**

IT'S NICE to have a good review of **The Worm: The Longest Comic Strip in the World** (**CI** #119).

However, I must correct your reviewer in relocating our arts funding benefactors to Finland when, in fact, they are in Sweden.

To some people, I know, Scandinavia is all the same place with snow everywhere you look. But my haste in correcting this mistake is motivated by more than any justified pedantry.

I can't express deeply enough my thanks to the Swedish Council For Cultural Affairs and Daniel Atterbom, who contacted them for us to help in publishing **The Worm**, which would otherwise, in my opinion, never have seen print.

He'd first heard about it when I was at a UK Comicon describing the event we had put on. Considering the future efforts he made for us, it was ironic that this initial introduction to the work drew a response from him we didn't appreciate. He revealed he had been involved in creating another marathon comic strip in Stockholm which, though different in nature to ours, was much longer and was listed in the Swedish edition of **The Guinness Book of Records**.

The organisers of our epic had worked in collaboration with *The Guinness World of Records* exhibition, and had not been informed about the Stockholm strip, despite making enquiries beforehand concerning the existence of any similar work listed in **The Guinness Book**. At the time, we were waiting to see if a listing for our

Mike Kazybrid's COMIC CUTS

Script by Paul Kristian

RIGHT THEN - THAT'S MORBIUS, VAULT OF HORROR, CRYPT OF SHADOWS.....
BAT-MAN
...FLESH AND BONES, MR. MONSTER AND TALES TOO TERRIBLE TO TELL...
THE VAULT
...AND PORKY PIG AND THE LUCKY PEPPERMINT MINE! ER... DO YOU WANT THAT LAST ONE IN A BROWN PAPER BAG?
KAZYBRID

Send your script ideas to the above address and you could win the original art if yours is published.

Please note: All scripts are submitted on the understanding they become the copyright property of Kazybrid, Skinn and Comics International.

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creation would qualify for entry.

Ours was, and to my knowledge still is the longest ever completed in one session – eight hours – and it's a fully realised example of strip storytelling which still deserves an official listing for the specific nature of its record setting achievement.

Then, in the middle of '99, I learned from Daniel that the elastic was finally going to snap – the year 2000 would mark the Swedish Art Grant's expiry! Luckily, the passing years had brought continuous improvement in publishing technology, and Peter Pavement – ace creator of Slab-O-Concrete – could now prepare the whole thing for printing within economic bounds that made **The Worm** a viable proposition as an entirely self-supported project.

So, we found a printer, solicited orders and, in collaboration with the Cartoon Art Trust and Slab-O-Concrete, we published it. At last! The Swedish Council For Cultural Affairs waited for us for five years.

Without them, a unique and valuable piece of comics craft would still be just a memory for all those who were generous enough to have helped in its creation.

The spirit of Vietnam

Paul Dale Roberts
5606 Moonlight Way
Elk Grove CA 95758, USA

JUST GOT done reading **Comics International** #119 and enjoyed the *Preview* of Will Eisner's **Vietnam**.

Standing ovation to the **Spirit** creator for getting this work into production. It will be interesting to see Vietnam through his eyes. I have heard many stories from my own half-brother Andres Somprise Soyo and the stories he told me at times sent shivers down my spine.

I was fortunate to have been in the Army during peace time. A memory of the last day in Vietnam should be forever memorable.

On another note, I was surprised to hear that Everette Hartsoe's creation **Razor** will be made into a movie. Razor is one of the most dangerous femme fatales and would probably give Wolverine a run for his money. I truly will be looking forward to watching this movie on the big screen. There are so many surprises in the comicbook industry, I never know what to expect next.

Right now, people are clamoring over the upcoming *X-Men* movie! If it does well, it will open even more gates for comics-based movies!

Just want to let your staff know that they are doing an exceptional job with **CI**! This publication is really shining!

Bollocking Morrell

Karl Disley
Address witheld by request

I'M DROPPING you a line concerning the disgusting racist ranting of Steven Morrell in his claims about the Fantastic Four *(Letters,* **CI** #118).

Let me reassure you, the FF is most decidedly not racist. Need I remind you and any up and coming xenophobes that this comic introduced us to the Black Panther (comics' first black hero) and a capable disabled character, Alicia Masters. The 1999 Annual even introduced us to the Torch's new wife, shock horror, a black woman.

Morrell attempts to carry dubious favour with the absurd notion of Alan Moore as the new comics' writer. No thank you, we fanboys don't need any anti-establishment lick-spittling to kow down to the cynical anti-comics conspiracy currently trying to outmanoeuvre genuine comics writing.

Watchmen was undeniably a masterpiece, but can't be adapted to each and every comic. What kind of unsound misdirection is this? I'd expect some moron from Merseyside to make these absurd notions (this also answers Dave West's concerns about Merseycon – an apt name indeed – in #118's *Comment)*, not someone from Sheffield.

Let's nip these nasty rumours in the bud. As the author of **Fantastic Forever** and over 20 websites dedicated to my favourite comic, I welcome reasoned comment. You never know, a little bit of common sense might actually work.

Morrell, les bolloques

"Mad" Steven Morrell
881 Barnsley Road
Sheffield S5 0QJ

IN REBUTTAL to JC Lebourdais' letter *(Comment,* **CI** #119): JC, if you're going to attack Mark Waid over Deus ex machina story endings in **The Flash** (I fucking hate French creeping into the English language), then why not have a go at the greatest copout of all time?

I'm talking about that classic Lee/Kirby story of The Fantastic Four vs Galactus where all is lost until the Watcher conveniently pops up and hands Reed an Earth-saving device. "Wow, look, it's the Ultimate Nullifier". Fuck me, that's not a cop out, is it?

We have four superhumans, facing Jesus Christ and the Wrath of God. It is impossible for the FF to win this ultimate fight.

But comics are for the most part pure soap opera. If they were not, there would be no industry. Unlike food, you don't need to keep buying comic books!

If JC's argument is that he feels let down by Mark Waid's **Flash**, that's fair enough. But when was the last time that Tin Tin fucking saved the universe?

Yeah, too right, Steven. Tosspot French, eh? Shame they know Latin when they hear it, though. And isn't Tin Tin Belgian? ...Dez

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HARVEY COMICS ENTERTAINMENTS, 100 Wilshire Boulevard, Santa Monica, CA 91401 (humour titles) (00)1 310 451 3377

HEAVY METAL, 100 Merrick Rd, Suite 400 East, The Rockville Center, NY. 11570 (adult fantasy magazines and spin-offs) (00)1 516 594 2130

IMAGE COMICS, 1440 North Harbor Boulevard, Suite 305, Fullerton, CA 92835 (adventure titles) (00)1 714 8718802

LONDON NIGHT STUDIOS, 2421 North Center Street #309, Hickory, NC28601 (adult horror titles)

MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016 (adventure titles, humour titles and licensed titles) (00)1 212 696 0808

NBM PUBLICATIONS, 185 Madison Avenue, Suite 1504, New York, NY 10016 (adult fantasy graphic novels and magazines)

ONI PRESS, 6336 South East Milwaukie Avenue, Suite 30, Portland, Oregon 97202 (adventure titles) (00)1 503 233 1377

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT, PO Box 834, Dover, NJ 07802 (adult)

SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS, 979 South Bascom Avenue, San Jose, CA 95128 (fantasy black & white titles) (00)1 408 279 0451

TOP COW, 10390 Santa Monica Boulevard #110, Los Angeles, CA 90025 (adventure and licensed titles)

VEROTIK, PO Box 64859, Los Angeles, CA 07043 (adult fantasies)

VIZ COMICS, PO Box 77010, San Francisco, CA 94107 (translated manga titles)

WaRP GRAPHICS, 43 Haight Avenue, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 (Elfquest and spin-off titles) (00)1 914 473 9277

WILDSTORM, 7910 Ivanhoe Street, #438 La Jolla, CA 92037 (includes ABC, Cliffhanger and Homage imprints)

UNITED KINGDOM

The following are the major UK newsstand comics and graphic novel publishers. If calling from outside of the UK, drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe and Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

DC THOMSON, Albert Square, Dundee DD1 9QJ (humour titles and adventure titles)

EGMONT FLEETWAY, 25-31 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SU (adventure, humour, licensed and pre-school) 020 7344 6400

HAMLYN BOOKS, Michelin House, 81 Fulham Road, London SW3 (2000AD graphic novels) 020 7581 9393

JOHN BROWN PUBLISHING, The Boathouse, Crabtree Lane, Fulham, London SW6 (Viz) 020 7381 6007

KNOCKABOUT COMICS, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (humour and underground comix, graphic novels) 020 8969 2945

MARVEL COMICS (UK), Panini House, Coach and Horses Passage, The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells, Kent KT2 5UJ (humour, adventure, licensed titles) 01892 500 100

THE REDAN COMPANY, Appleton House, 139 King Street, London W6 9JG (pre-school humour titles) 020 8563 1563

SAVOY BOOKS, 446 Wilmslow Road, Withington, Manchester M20 3BW (mature titles) 0161 833 2664

TITAN ENTERTAINMENT GROUP LTD, Titan House, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 OUP (licensed graphic novels, books, magazines and comics) 020 7620 0200

FRANCE

The following are the major comics and album publishers. If phoning from USA, code of 0033 becomes 011 33

ALBIN MICHEL, 22 rue Huyghens, 75014 Paris (albums)(0033) 42 79 10 00

CASTERMAN, 66 rue Bonaparte, 75006, Paris (albums and manga titles) (0033) 40 51 28 00

DARGAUD, 6 rue Gager Gabillot, 75015 Paris (albums and manga titles) (0033) 40 45 35 39

DELCOURT, 5 passage du Mont-Cenis, 75018 Paris (albums and comics) (0033) 53 41 86 10

FLUIDE GLACIAL, 33 avenue du Main, BP 187, 75755 Paris (comics and albums) (0033) 43 20 23 96

GLENAT, 31 rue Ernest Renan, 92130 Issy les Moulineaux (albums and manga titles) (0033) 41 46 11 11

J'AI LU, 84 rue de Grenelle, 75007 Paris (manga titles)(0033) 44 39 34 70

LES HUMANOIDES ASSOCIES, 24 avenue Philippe Auguste, 75011 Paris (albums) (0033) 44 93 88 33

MARVEL, BP 62, 06702 St Laurent Duvar (0033) 92 12 57 57

SEMIC FRANCE, 45 rue Broca, 75005 Paris (comics) (0033) 43 36 32 00

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North America, Britain and France. Contact details for the key comics companies.

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Going on holiday? Visiting relatives? First check out our listing of stores all around the world!

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The only international reference guide for dealers, fans, creators and globetrotters.

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For Sale. Wanted. Announcements. The first stop for all bargain hunters!

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Whatever you're looking for: from manga to Silver Age to the latest hot titles, you'll find all the main suppliers listed here.

READERS: THERE'S MORE TO COME! DON'T MISS *HALLMARKS* FOLLOWING THIS SECTION!

RETAIL INDEX: UK

Key to abbreviations used:

imp = air imported new issues
back = back issues stocked
s-p = small press & fanzines
merch = trading cards, videos, T-shirts, posters, etc
u/g = underground comix
STO = Standing order service (new comics reserved)
RPG = role playing games
CCG = customisable card games
Sorry, no websites, this is a shop guide

When telephoning from outside the UK, drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe & Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

CENTRAL LONDON

Avalon Comics, 143 Lavender Hill, Battersea, London SW11 5QJ. Mon-Thurs 10-5.45; Fri 10-6.30; Sat 9.30-5.30; Sun 11-3.30 (imp, back, merch, ind, STO, CCG) 020 7924 3609

B-Hive, 28 Denmark Street, London WC2. Mon-Fri 10-7; Sat 9-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, ind, gn, merch, toys) tel/fax: 020 7836 3036

Book & Comic Exchange, 14 Pembridge Road, Notting Hill Gate, London W11. Mon-Sun 10-8. Nothing legal refused! (back, ind, u/g) 020 7229 8420

Comic Showcase 63 Charing Cross Road, London WC2H 0NE. Sun-Wed 10-7; Thurs-Fri 10-8; Sat 9.30-8 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, cartoon books, original art) 020 7434 4349

Forbidden Planet, 71-75 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1DG. Mon-Wed/Sat 10-6; Thurs-Fri 10-7 (imp, back s-p, merch, ind, film/TV) 020 7836 4179

Gosh!, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH (opposite British Museum). 10-6 (inc Bank Hols); Thurs-Fri until 7 (imp, back, merch, ind, foreign, u/g, STO, largest range of newspaper strip compilations in UK) 020 7636 1011

Mega-City Comics, 18 Inverness Street, Camden Town, London NW1 7HJ. Mon-Sun 10-6; (Thurs-Fri until 7) (imp, back, merch, s-p, ind, u/g, film/TV, fantasy, horror, body art, subculture, STO) 020 7485 9320

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftsbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EH. Mon-Wed 10.30-6.30; Thurs-Sat 10-7; Sun 10-4 (imp, back, merch, ind, TV/film and fantasy, STO) 020 7836 5630

OUTER LONDON

A Place in Space, 101 Church Street, Croydon, Surrey CR0 1RN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (comics, sci-fi books, back, merch, ind, RPG, CCG, original art, accessories, STO) 020 8686 2400

Ashcan, 3 Eagle Star House, 299-301 High Street, Sutton, Surrey SM1 1LG. Mon-Wed/Fri 10.30-5.30; Thurs 10-7; Sat 9-6 (imp, back, ind, merch, STO) 020 8770 3815

Atomic Comics, 1112 High Road, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex RM6 4AH. Mon-Sat 10-6; Fri 10-7 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, STO, Second hand horror, fantasy, sci-fi books, original art) 020 8597 8547

Calamity Comics, 160 Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2HR. Mon-Wed 10-6, (Thurs-Fri until 7); Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, RPG, STO, fantasy/TV/film/books/merch/videos) 020 8427 3831

Comic Shack, 720 High Road, Leytonstone, London E11 3NN. Mon-Thurs 9.30-5.30; Fri-Sat 9.30-6.30; Sun 11-5 (back) 020 8539 7260/8555 9303(eve)

Forbidden Planet, 175 North End, Croydon CR0 1TP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30; (Thurs until 7). (imp, back, merch, ind, STO, CCGs, film and TV magazines, sci-fi and fantasy books, videos) 020 8688 7190

Into the Void (formerly Lost Universe), 262 Streatham High Road, Streatham SW16 1HS. Mon-Sat 9.30-7; Sun 11-3. (imp, back, merch, toys, action figures, STO, film-related merch) 020 8677 7037

Krypton Komics, 252 High Road, Tottenham, London N15 4AJ (next to Tesco) Mon-Fri 10.30-6; Sat 10-6; Sun 11-6 Nearest Tube: Seven Sisters Road. (imp, back, s-p, ind, STO) 020 8801 5378 (fax: 020 8376 3174)

Skinny Melinks, 66 Loampit Vale, London SE13. Mon-Wed/Sat 11-6; Thurs-Fri 11-7; Sun 11-5 (50p sale on back issues under £3 Sat-Mon) 020 8318 0499

They Walk Among Us, 32 Union Court, Sheen Road, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1AA. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (Fri until 6) (imp, merch, back, ind, u/g, fantasy/sci-fi/horror books, STO, subculture) tel/fax: 020 8948 8476

30th Century Comics, 18 Lower Richmond Road, London SW15 1JP. Mon-Wed 10.30-6; Thurs-Fri 10.30-7; Sat 10.30-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, Gold/Silver/Bronze Age specialists, British comics/annuals, ind, u/g, STO, merch, books) 020 8788 2052

NEW **Time Trek**, 46 High St, Bromley, Kent BR1 1EG. Mon-Wed + Sat 9.30-5.30; Thurs 10-8; Sun 10-4 (imp, back, TV, film, merch, ind, STO, CCG) 020 8313 0677

SOUTH EAST

The American Comic Shop, 1 Church Street, Chatham, Kent ME4 4BS (just off High Street). Mon-Thurs 10-5.30; Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30. (imp, back, STO, merch, Star Trek/Star Wars, ind) 01634 817410

Calamity Comics 2, 90 Queens Road, The Broadway, Watford WD1 2LA. Mon-Tues 10-5.30; Thurs/Fri 10-7; Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, STO, RPG, fantasy TV/film books, merch, videos) 01923 249293

Cartoon Shop, 19 East Square, Basildon, Essex SS14 1HT. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, RPG, STO) 01268 534194

Central City Comics, 4 Eagle Street, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 1JB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, foreign, STO) 01473 233017

Chaos City, 20 Heritage Close, (off High Street), St Albans Herts AL3 4EB. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (Thurs until 8); Sun 12-4 (imp, back, merch, STO, RPG, CCG) 01727 838719

Comic Showcase, 19-20 St Clements Street, Oxford OX4 1AB. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, u/g, STO) 01865 723680

Comics Unlimited, Unit 11, The Arcade, Letchworth, Herts. Mon-Sat 9-5.30 (closed Wed) (imp, back, merch, STO, RPG, CCG, action figures, videos, Games Workshop) 01462 480018

David's Comic Shop, 5 Sydney Street, Brighton, Sussex BN1 4EN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.45; Sun 11-4 (imp, back, ind, STO, u/g) 01273 691012

Daydream Nation Trading Cards at Hive, 6 Kensington Gardens, Brighton BN1 4AL. Mon-Sat 10-6 (cards, CCGs, sports, Ultra-Pro) 01273 687 877

Forbidden Planet, 60 Burleigh Street. Cambridge CB1 1DJ. Mon-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, ind, u/g, STO, CCG, videos, sci-fi/fantasy books, TV/film magazines, merch) 01223 301666

Forbidden Planet (FPS), 63/64 High Street, Colchester, Essex. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, u/g, ind, RPG, rock t-shirts, STO) 01206 761 589

Hive, 6 Kensington Gardens, Brighton BN1 4AL. Mon-Sat 8.30-6; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, STO, u/g, ind) 01273 687802

Hive, Unit 22, The Guildbourne Centre, Chapel Road, Worthing, West Sussex BN11 1LZ. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, STO, u/g, ind) 01903 213131

Incognito Comic Shop, 1-2 The Friars, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2AS. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30; Sun 11-4 (imp, back, ind, merch, STO, film/TV merch) tel/fax: 01227 785898

Incognito Comic Shop, 21 Union Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1EB. Mon-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, merch, ind, STO, film/TV) tel/fax: 01622 683642

Into the Void, 324-325 Chartwell North, Top Floor, Victoria Plaza, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS2 5SR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, merch, ind, u/g, STO) 01702 613021

Into the Void, 82 Upper Thames Walk, Bluewater, Kent DA9 9SR. Mon-Fri 10-9; Sat 9-8; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, merch, RPG, CCG, STO) 01322 427660

Into the Void, 626-627 Pavillion, Lakeside Shopping Centre, West Thurrock, Essex RM20 2ZN. Mon-Fri 10-7.30; Sat 9-7.30; Sun 11-5 (imp, back, merch, RPG, CCG, STO) 01708 862675

Off World: The Sci-Fi Store, Unit 20, Romford Shopping Halls, Market Place, Essex RM1 3AT. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (merch s-p imp STO CCG; Star Trek/Star Wars and sci-fi collectables) 01708 765633

Phoenix Fantasy, 9 Market Street, Margate, Kent CT9 1EU. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, merch, ind, STO, RPG, CCG) 01843 224768

Slough Computers, 50 Village Shopping Centre, Slough, Berkshire SL1 1HP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, ind, STO, cards, second hand computer games) 01753 521594

Whatever Comics, 2 Burgate Lane, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2HH. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, STO, model kits) 01227 453226

Whatever Comics, 5 Middle Row, High Street, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1TF. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, STO, model kits) 01622 681041

MIDLANDS

Abstract Sprocket, 29 St Benedicts Street, Norwich, Norfolk NR2 4PF. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, ind, s-p, merch, u/g, STO) 01603 624410

Another World, 42/43 Main Centre (opp Wilkinsons) Derby. Mon-Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, ind, merch, STO, RPG, rock/TV/film memorabilia, computer games, t-shirts) 01332 206606

Another World, 23 Silver Street, Leicester LE1 5EU. Mon-Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, ind, merch, foreign, u/g, STO, RPG, rock t-shirts, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 0116 2515266

Another World, 11 Market Street, Nottingham. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, foreign, u/g, STO, RPG, rock t-shirts, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 0115 9484122

Another World, 52 Stafford Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 1JB. Mon-Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, STO, RPG, rock t-shirts/memorabilia, alchemy metalware) 01782 279294 (fax: 202381)

Another World, 23 Victoria Street, Wolverhampton WV1 3NP. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, STO, RPG, rock t-shirts, alchemy metalware, rock memorabilia) 01902 717440

Comic Box, Unit 3, Antiques Craft and Collectors Market, Salop Street, Wolverhampton. Tues-Wed/Fri 9-4; Sat 9-5 (imp, back, merch, ind, model/resin kits, sci-fi/horror collectables) 01384 835489 or 07808 044754

Comic Legends, The Antiques Centre, 60 Ely Street, Stratford-Upon-Avon, Warwickshire CV37 6LN. Mon-Fri 11-5; Sat 10-5; Sun 11-4 (imp, back, merch, STO, RPG, CCG, toys, models, sci-fi/horror) 01789 263349

Forbidden Planet, Unit 542, Bull Ring Centre, Birmingham B5 4PX. Mon-Sat 9.30-6; (Thurs until 7). (imp, back, merch, ind, STO, film/TV sci-fi/horror books; CCG, RPG) 0121 643 77273/fax: 643 2202

Forbidden Planet, 31 Cross Cheaping, Coventry CV1 1HF. Mon-Sat 9.30-6 (Thurs until 7) (imp, back, merch, ind, u/g, STO, film/TV, sci-fi/horror books, CCG, RPG) 024 76229672

Forbidden Planet (FPS), 129 Middle Walk, Broadmarsh Centre, Nottingham NG1 7LN. Mon-Sat 9-6 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, film/TV, videos, STO) 0115 958 4706

Forbidden Planet Superstore, 38 Priory Queensway, Birmingham B4 7LA. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30; (Thurs-Fri to 6) (imp, back, merch, ind, STO, RPG, CCG, action figures, books, clothing, games, gn, mags, model kits, t-shirts, toys, videos) 0121 236 3026

Ground Zero, 9 Toothill Lane, Mansfield, Notts NG18 1NJ. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, merch, STO, CCG, toys, comic supplies) 01623 622017

Nostalgia & Comics (FPS), 14-16 Smallbrook, Queensway, Birmingham. Mon-Thurs 9.15-5.45; Fri-Sat 9.15-6 (imp, back, merch, ind, s-p, u/g, STO) 0121 643 0143

Page 45, 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY. Mon-Sat 9-6. (imp, back, s-p, ind, gn, u/g, merch specialists, STO, manga) 0115 9508045

Phoenix Comix, 29 Abington Square, Northampton NN1 4AE. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, merch, ind, STO, RPG, CCG, action figures) 01604 602311

Sci-Fi Unlimited, 4 Clair Court, Lime Street, Bedford MK40 1NH. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, merch, STO, RPG, CCC, action figures, videos) 01234 218984

Time Zone, 31 Castle Street, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 2BW. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, merch, ind, STO, CCG) 01743 365192

NORTH WEST

Alpha Omega Comics, 33-35 Library Street, Wigan, Lancs WN1 1NN. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, merch, STO, videos) 07808 547722

Forbidden Planet, 92 Bold Street, Liverpool L1 4HY. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (Thurs until 7) (imp, back merch, ind, u/g, STO, film and TV, sci-fi and horror books, RPG, CCG) 0151 707 1491

Forbidden Planet Megastore (FPS), 65 Oldham Street, Piccadilly, Manchester M1 1JR. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (2 floors; imp, back, merch, STO, RPG, CCG, books, toys, film/TV tie-ins, manga) 0161 839 4777

Imagination Station, 16 Botchergate, Carlisle, Cumbria CA1 1QS. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, merch, ind, STO)

The Last Picture Show, 52-53 Festival Village, Trafford Centre, Manchester M17 8FS. Mon-Fri 10-9; Sat 9-7; Sun 11-6 (imp, back, merch, ind, STO, RPG, CCG, film/TV/rock memorabilia) 0161 747 4177

Metropolis Collectables, Unit 11-12 (basement) Jaxons Court, off Hallgate, Wigan. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, ind, merch, Doctor Who specialist, Star Wars/Trek, videos, toys, gn, CCG, games) 07990 808060

Millennium Comics, 4 Church Road, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 5NT. Mon-Tues 10-5; Wed closed; Thurs-Fri 10-5.30; Sat 9-5 (imp, back, s-p, merch, STO, RPG, action figures, toys) tel/fax: 01606 49255

Thunderbooks, 332 Lytham Road, Blackpool FY4 1DW. 10-5.30 Mon, Tues, Thurs-Sat (Sun June-Oct inc); Wed 1-3.30 (imp, back, merch, ind, STO, media collectors' items) 01253 348321 (fax: 407813)

Thunderbooks II, 116 Friargate, Preston, PR1 9EE. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, merch, s-p, ind, STO, RPG) 01772 204287

Time Tunnel, 13 Earle Street, Crewe, Cheshire CW1 2BS. Mon and Wed-Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, TV and film memorabilia, action figures, merch, STO, videos, model kits) 01270 215496

Worlds Apart, 58-60 Lime Street (city centre), Liverpool. Mon-Sat 10-6 (Fri 10-7) (imp, back, ind, merch, STO, film magazines) e-mail: WorldsApart@compuserve.com 0151 707 0839

NORTH EAST

Books N' Comics, Unit 15, Forbes Building, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS1 4AW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, STO, fantasy/film magazines, Doctor Who, Star Trek) 01642 249143

Forbidden Planet (FPS), 30 Eastgate, The Headrow, Leeds LS2 7JL. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, LF film books, media/TV/film magazines, T-shirts, posters, toys, kits, trading cards, cards, badges, stills, Star Trek, Doctor Who, etc) 0113 242 6325

Forbidden Planet, 59 Grainger Street, Newcastle NE1 5JE. Mon-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, merch, ind, u/g, STO, film/TV mags, fantasy/sci-fi books, videos) 0191 261 9173

Forbidden Planet (FPS), 12 Matilda, off the Moor, Sheffield, Yorkshire. Mon-Fri 10-6; Sat 9.15-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, original art, model kits, sci-fi and fantasy books, horror mags, newspaper strip books) 0114 276 9475

Galaxy 4, 493 Glossop Road, Broomhill, Sheffield S10 2QE. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, STO, Doctor Who/Star Wars specialists, TV, paperbacks) 0114 268 4976

The Last Picture Show, 38-39 The Lanes, The Oasis, Meadowhall Centre, Sheffield S9 1EP. Mon-Thurs 10-8; Fri 10-9; Sat 9-7, Sun 11-5 (imp, back, merch, ind, STO, RPG, CCG, film/TV and rock memorabilia) 0114 256 9604 (fax: 255 3399)

Off-World Comics, 200 Park View, Whitley Bay, Tyne & Wear NE26 3QP. Mon, Tues, Thurs 10-5.30 (closed Wed); Fri 10-6; Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, merch, ind, STO, CCG) 0191 251 2288

Resurrection Comics & Games, 22 Redcar Road, Guisborough, Cleveland TS14 6DB. Wed-Sat 12-7; Sun 12-6 (imp, back, merch, gn, ind, STO, RPG) 01287 207100

Sheffield Space Centre, 33 The Wicker, Sheffield, Yorks. Mon-Sat 10-5 (Wed closed) (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, STO, Star Trek) 0114 275 8905

Star Rider, 128 Victoria Street, Grimsby DN31 1NT. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, merch, STO, CCG, action figures, DVD/TV/film memorabilia 01472 354 590

Star Store, 66-68 Cambridge Street, Sheffield S1 4HP. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, merch, ind, RPG, CCG, film/

TV/rock mem, STO) 0114 273 0066

Travelling Man, Unit 8/9 The Corn Exchange, Call Lane, Leeds LS1 7BR. Mon-Thurs 10-5.30, Fri-Sat 9-5.30, Sun 11-5 (imp, back, merch, ind, STO, RPG, CCG) 0113 242 7227

Travelling Man, 54 Goodramgate, York YO1 2LF. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, merch, ind, STO, RPG, CCG) 01904 628787

The Twilight Zone, 69 Godwin Street, Bradford, Yorks. Mon-Sat 10.30-5.30 (imp, back, ind, STO) 01274 745567

WEST COUNTRY

American Dream Comics, 72 Walcot Street, Bath BA1 5BD. Mon-Fri 10-5, Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, STO, original art gallery, u/g, hobby kits, CDs) 01225 424881

Area 51, 143 Gloucester Road, Bristol. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, ind, merch, STO, RPG, u/g, original artwork) 0117 924 4655

Automattic Comics, Unit 2, 17 Pickwick Road, Corsham SN13 9BQ. Mon-Tues 12-5, (Wed closed), Thurs-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, STO) 01249 701647

Forbidden Planet, 30 Penn Street, Bristol BS1 3AS. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30 (Thurs until 7), Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, film/TV magazines, videos, STO, subculture, body art) 0117 929 8692

Forbidden Planet (FPS), Leigh Delamere Granada Services, M4 Eastbound, Wiltshire SN14 6LB. Mon-Sun 8-8 (imp, ind, merch, video, fantasy film/TV merch, books) 01666 837 712

Forbidden Planet (FPS), Reading Granada Services M4 Eastbound, Reading RG30 3QU. Mon-Sun 8-8 (imp, ind, merch, video, fantasy film/TV merch, books) 01118 951 2475

Forbidden Planet, 43-45 East Street, Southampton SO14 3HN. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30 (Thurs until 6), Sat 9.30-6 (imp, ind, back, s-p, merch, u/g, video, film/TV, STO) 023 80230991(fax: 230996)

Heroes for Sale, 11 Grosvenor Terrace, Cheltenham, Glouc GL52 2SA. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9.30-6 (imp, back, merch, action figures, STO, RPG, CCG, movie props) 01242 269452

Ian's Books & Comics, 195a Albert Road, Southsea, Portsmouth PO4 0JP (next to tesco). Mon-Tues & Thurs-Fri 10.30-5.15 (Wed closed) Sat 10-5.15 (imp, back, s-p, STO, toys, trade paperbacks, supplies 023 92422731

Into the Void, 11 Rodbourne Road, Swindon, Wilts SN2 2AG. Mon-Sat 9-5 (imp, back, merch, STO, CCG) 01793 434363

Kathies Comics, 20 Market Avenue, Plymouth, PL1 1PH. Mon-Fri 9.30-5.30; Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, STO) 01752 257800

Paradox Comics, 30 Hill Street, Poole, Dorset BH15 1NR. Mon-Fri 10.30-5; Sat 10-5 (imp, back, ind, merch, STO, gn, videos)01202 661346

Purple Haze, 38 Eastlake Walk, Drakes Circus Shopping Centre, Plymouth, Devon PL1 1BX. Mon-Fri 10-5.30, Sat 9-5.30 (imp, back, ind, u/g, STO, magazines, merch, film, TV, sci-fi, horror, genre books, videos, Star Trek/Star Wars, cassettes/CDs) 01752 254136

Wonderworld, 1 Lansdowne Crescent, Bournemouth, Dorset BH1 1RU. Tues-Sat 10-6 (imp, back, merch, ind, Star Trek/Wars, STO) 01202 293054

WALES

Cardiff Fantasy Centre, 1st Floor, Jacobs Market, West Canal Wharf, Cardiff. Sat 9.30-4.30 (imp, back, STO; established for over 20 years) 029 20563005 (eve)

Comix Shoppe, 13 Shoppers Walk, Swansea SA1 3AY. Mon-Fri 10-5, Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, merch, ind, u/g, STO, RPG, anime, Games Workshop, CCG) 01792 642097

Forbidden Planet (FPS), 5 Duke Street, Cardiff. Mon-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, ind, back, merch, u/g, STO, sci-fi/fantasy/horror books, Star Trek/Wars) 029 20228885

Journey into Mystery Stall 237, 1st Floor, Cardiff Central Market, City Centre. Tues-Fri 11-5; Sat 10.30-5.15 (back, STO, established for 12 years) 07974 054880

Negative Zone, Provision Market Gallery, High Street, Newport, Gwent NP9 1DD. Mon-Sat 9.30-5 (imp, back, s-p, ind, gn, STO; established for 11 years) 01633 222159

SCOTLAND

A1 Books & Comics, 31-35 Parnie Street, Glasgow G1 5RJ. Mon-Wed 9.30-5.30; Thurs-Sat 9.30-6; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, s-p, merch, ind, u/g, STO) 0141 552 6692

A1 Comics West End, 635 Great Western Road, Glasgow G12. Mon-Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5 (imp, back, merch, ind, STO) 0141 357 6944

Asylum Books & Games, 29 Adelphi, Aberdeen AB11 5B2. Mon-Sat 10-6 (Mon/Thurs to 8); Sun 12-5 (imp, back, STO, RPG (new/second hand), books, miniatures, CCG, original art) 01224 574 637

Black Hole Comic Shop, Unit 3, 5 Victoria Road, Dundee DD1 1ER. Mon-Thurs 10-5; Fri-Sat 10-5.30 (imp, back, ind, STO, second hand records, CDs, videos) 01382 221037

City Centre Comics, 168 Buchanan Street, Glasgow G1 2LW. Mon-Wed 10-5.30; Thurs-Fri 10-6; Sat 10-5.30; Sun 12-5 (back) 0141 331 1215 (eves: 632 2786)

Forbidden Planet (FPS), 40-41 South Bridge, Edinburgh EH1 1LL. Mon-Wed 10-5.30, Thurs 10-6.30; Fri-Sat 10-5.30 Sun 12-5. (imp, s-p, merch, ind, foreign, STO) 0131 558 8226

Forbidden Planet (FPS), 168 Buchanan Street, Glasgow G1 2LW. Mon-Sat 10-5.30, Sun 12-5 (imp, back, s-p, ind, merch, u/g, STO) 0141 331 1215

Future Shock, 89 Byres Road, Glasgow G11 5HN. Mon-Sat 10-6; Sun 12-5.30 (imp, back, merch, ind, STO, import/old sci-fi paperbacks specialist) 0141 339 8184

Justice Comics, Unit 36, The Arcade, Stirling, Fife FK8 1AX. Mon-Sat 10-5 (imp, back, ind, STO, merch) 01786 447687

Plan 9, 9 Rosemount Viaduct, Aberdeen AB1 1NE. Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (Thurs until 7.30), Sun 1-4.30. (imp, back, Star Trek/Wars, ind, RPG & war game specialist, kits, MTG, STO, magick/tarot) 01224 624467

NORTHERN IRELAND

Talisman Comics, 47 Winetavern Street, Belfast BT1 1JQ Mon-Sat 9.30-5.30 (imp, back, merch, ind, u/g, STO) 028 90438744

RETAIL INDEX: USA

When telephoning from outside the USA, include the bracketed 00. Out-of-town US calls begin with the 1 prefix only.

The following is a fraction of the estimated 3,000+ US comics stores

ALABAMA

NEW **Optic Nerve**, 1930 12th Avenue South, Birmingham AL 35205 (film, newsstand, independents) (00)1 205 933 2787

ALASKA

Bosco's in Spenard, 2606 Spenard Road, Anchorage 99503. Mon-Sat 11-8, Sun 12-6 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, anime, merch, pop culture, costumes). E-mail: info@boscos.com Website: www.boscos.com (00) 1 907 274 4112 (fax 4117)

Bosco's Diamond Centre, 800 East Diamond Blvd, Anchorage 99577. Mon-Fri 10-9, Sat 10-6, Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, anime, chess, Games Workshop, Star Wars Star Trek) t/f (00) 1 907 344 3963

Bosco's in Eagle River, 11432 Business Boulevard, Eagle River. Mon-Sat 12-8, Sun 12-5 (new, back, CCG, RPG, cards, sci-fi, posters) tel/fax (00) 1 907 696 5166

ARIZONA

Lost Dutchman, 747 West Camelback Road, Phoenix, AZ 85013. Mon-Sun 10-7. (new, back inc 50,000+ Silver Age). E-mail: ldcomics@netzone.com Website: www.netzone.com/~ldcomics tel/fax (00)1 619 278 0371

CALIFORNIA

Comickaze, 4202-100 Genesee Ave, San Diego, CA 92117-4905 Mon-Fri 11-7; Sat 11-6; Sun 12-6 (new, back, CCG, video, merch). E-mail: comickaze@geocities.com Website: www.glacierweb.com/comickaze (00)1 619 278 0371

Comix Experience, 305 Divisadero St, San Francisco, CA 94117. Mon-Sat 11-7; Sun 12-5 (new, back). E-mail: comixexperience@compuserve.com (00)1 415 863 9258 (fax 9299)

Flying Colors Comics, 2980 Treat Boulevard, Concord, CA 94518. Mon-Sat 11-7 (Fri to 8); Sun 12-6 (new, back, ind, cards, merch). E-mail: flyingcolorscomics@compuserve.com (00)1 510 825 5410 (fax 5412)

Lee's Comics, Inc., 3783 El Camino Real, Palo Alto, CA 94306. Mon-Sun 11-9 (new, back ('30s to date), anime, manga, s-p, adult, merch) (00)1 650 493 3957

Lee's Comics, Inc., 2222 S El Camino Real, San Mateo, CA 94402. Mon-Sun 11-8, (Wed to 9) (new, back ('30s to date), anime, manga, adult, s-p, merch) (00)1 650 571 1489

Stand-Up Comics, 10020 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530. Mon-Fri 11-7; Sat-Sun 11-6 (new, back, sport/non-sport cards, anime, CCG, merch) t/f: (00)1 510 525 3344

Third Planet, 3822 Sepulveda Boulevard, Torrance, CA 90505. Sun-Thur 11-8; Fri + Sat 11-9 (new, ind, back, CCG, RPG, Games Workshop, sci-fi/fantasy books, anime, videos – rental also, merch) (00)1 310 791 6227 (fax: 6230)

HAWAII

Gecko Books & Comics, 3613 Waialae Avenue, Honolulu, 96816. Mon-Sun 9-9 (new, back, cards, toys, merch, games, non-sport cards) E-mail: Geckobooks@compuserve.com (00)1 808 732 1292 (fax: 2188)

ILLINOIS

Comic Kingdom, 5941 West Irving Park Road, Chicago, IL 60634. (new, back: Over 100,000 from 1938 to date) (00)1 773 545 2231

LOUISIANA

Comic Cosmos, 343 West Esplanade Avenue, Kenner, LA 70065. Mon-Thur 11.30-7, Fri-Sat 11-7.30, Sun 12-5 (new, back, cards, CCG, toys, anime) (00)1 504 286 0039

Crescent City Comics & Cards, 6111 Elysian Fields, New Orleans, LA 70122. Mon-Sat 11-7, Sun 12-6 (new, back, cards, CCG, RPG, anime). E-mail: cccomics@aol.com(00)1 504 286 0039

More Fun Comics, 8200 Oak Street, New Orleans, LA 70118. Tues-Sat 11-7, Sun-Mon 12-6 (new, back, cards, CCG, merch, toys, new music/second hand CDs) (00)1 504 865 1800

MAINE

Casablanca Comics, 151 Middle Street, Portland, ME 04101. Mon-Sat 10-9, Sun 12-7 (new, back, cards, CCG, RPG, merch, artwork, Games Workshop; US distribution for 1000 Editions Manga Art Prints). E-mail: comics@ime.net (00)1 207 780 1676

Casablanca Comics, 778 Roosevelt Trail, Windham, ME 04062. Mon-Fri 11-7, Sat 10-6, Sun 12-5 (new, back, cards, CCG, RPG, merch, artwork, Games Workshop). E-mail: comics@ime.net (00)1 207 892 0056

MASSACHUSETTS

Comicopia, 464 Commonwealth Ave, Boston, MA 02215. Sun-Tues 12-6, Wed 10-8, Thur-Fri 11-7 (new, alt T-shirts, CCG, White Wolf, manga, tpbks). E-mail: 103216.2717@compuserve.com (00)1 617 266 4266

NEW YORK STATE

Earthworld Comics, 327 Central Ave, Albany, NY 12206. Mon-Wed 11-6; Thur-Fri 11-7, Sat 11-6, Sun 12-5 (new, back, ind, manga/anime, sport/non-sport cards, merch). E-mail: Earthwrld1@aol.com (00)1 518 465 5495

Forbidden Planet (FPS associate), 840 Broadway (at 13th Street), NY 10003. Mon-Sat 10-10; Sun 12-10. (new, indies, back, RPG, merch, fantasy film/TV books) (00)1 212 473 1576

Jim Hanley's Universe Ltd, 4 W 33rd Street (opposite Empire State Building), NY 10001. Mon-Sat 9am-11pm; Sun 10-9. (Everything to do with comics) (00)1 212 268 7088

Jim Hanley's Universe Ltd, 325 New Dorp Lane, Staten Island, NY 10306. Mon-Sun; 12-9. (Everything to do with comics) (00)1 718 351 6299

OHIO

The Laughing Ogre, 4258 North High Street, Columbus, Ohio 43214. Mon-Sat 10-9; Sun 12-5 (new, back, cards, merch) E-mail: TheOgre@compuserve.com (00)1 614 267 6473 (fax 2855)

OKLAHOMA

Time Warp, 588 S. E. Washington Street, Bartlesville, OK 74006 (new, back, cards, 2nd hand video games, CDs, sci-fi/fantasy books) (00)1 918 335 3373

PENNSYLVANIA

Comic Castle, 17 W Fourth Street, Williamsport, PA 17703 Mon-Sun 10-9 (new, back, Silver/Golden Age specialists). Website: www.comiccastle.com (00)1 717 322 8763 (fax 8764)

Golden Eagle, Berkshire Square, 1159 Berkshire Boulevard, Wyoming, PA 19610 (new, back, games, CCG, trading cards, Star Wars/Star Trek, autograph collectibles) (00)1 610 376 8255

Golden Eagle, Fairgrounds Square Mall, Reading, PA 19605 (new, back, games, CCG, trading cards, Wars/Trek, autographs) (00)1 610 921 3160

TENNESSEE

Collector's World, 1511 East Main Street, Murfreesboro TN 37130 Open 7 days a week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 615 895 1120

Collector's World, Hickory Plaza S/C, 5751 Nolensville Rd, Nashville, TN 37211. Open all week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs)(00)1 615 895 1120

Collector's World, 10820 Kingston Park #10, Knoxville, TN 37922 Open 7 days a week (new, back, CCG, merch, cards, CDs) (00)1 423 675 6830

Collector's World, 4006 Granny White Park, Nashville TN 37204 (new, back, CCG, merch, trading cards, CDs) (00)1 615 385 8136

TEXAS

Cliff's Comics, 2205 West Berry Street, Fort Worth, TX 76110. (new, back, cards, merch). Website: www.flash.net/~cliffs/ (00)1 817 927 7172

Collectible Heroes, 502 W Calton Road #307, Laredo, TX 78041. Mon-Wed 2-7.30; Thurs-Sat 11.30-7.30 (new, back, sports cards/non-sports, merch) (00)1 956 791 8428

Dragon's Lair Comics & Fantasy, 616 W 34th Street, Austin, TX 78705 (new, back, games, anime, miniatures, supplies) (00)1 512 454 2399

VIRGINIA

Thore Comics, 3514 Oaklawn Boulevard, Hopewell, VA 23860. Mon-Sat 11-7, (new, back (Silver Age specialists), sci-fi, M:TG, NFL cards, 50s-70s rock albums) (00)1 804 458 9561

Trilogy Shop, 700 East Little Creek Road, Norfolk, VA 23518. Mon-Fri 11-7, Sat 10-7, Sun 12-6 (new, back, fanzines, anime videos, Star Trek/Star Wars memorabilia, merch). E-mail: trilogy@nfx.net (00)1 757 587 2540 (fax: 5637)

Direct Market Retailers:

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Retail Index, Comics International, 8 Trinity Road, London N2 8JJ, England

Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International. Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 20 8883 0302 or e-mail: Comics@Quality.win-uk.net

The letters **(FPS)** after various entries indicates that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet (Scotland) Ltd**

RETAILERS: INTERNATIONAL

AUSTRALIA

Arcadia Unbound, 267 Forest Road, Hurstville, NSW 2220. Mon-Wed & Fri 10.30-7, Thurs 10.30-8, Sat 10-4, Sun 12-3 (US imp, back, manga, merch, CCG, sci-fi books, fantasy books/magazines, kits and supplies) (0061) 2 9585 1489

Books & Bounties/Comics Haven, 157a Charters Towers Road, Hermit Park, Townsville, Queensland 4812. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat 9-4 (imp, back, manga, gn, merch, RPG, CCG). E-mail: Comics haven@Bigpond.com.au (0061) 7 4779 2408

Fan Attic, 1st Floor, 91 Elizabeth St, Brisbane, Queensland 4002. Mon-Sun 9.30-5.30 (rare toys, Star Wars, sci-fi collectibles) (0061) 7 3221 1420

Kinda Letsa Comics and Stuff, Shop 4, 503-511 King Street, Newtown, Sydney, New South Wales. Mon-Sat 10.30-7.30 (US back, toys, merch, non-sport cards) (0061) 2 9565 1054

Known Space Books, 1st Floor, 108 Gawler Place, Adelaide, SA 5000. Wed-Sat 12-6 (US/UK back, 2000AD specialist, sci-fi books) (0061) 8 8223 4304

Phantom Zone, 23 Anderson Street, Chatswood, New South Wales 2067. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, books, merch, manga, RPG, action figures, models) (0061) 2 9411 3709

Phantom Zone, 198 Mann Street, Gosford, NSW 2250. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, manga, RPG) (0061) 2 43 25 4599

Phantom Zone, 207 George Street, Liverpool, NSW Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, merch, manga, RPG, action figures) (0061) 2 9601 2622

Phantom Zone, 285 Hunter Street, Newcastle, New South Wales. 2300. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4. (imp, back, books, merch, manga, RPG, action figures, models) (0061) 2 4929 5717

Phantom Zone, 101a Argyle Street, Parramatta, New South Wales 2150 Mon-Fri 9-6; Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, books, merch, manga, RPG, action figures, models) (0061) 2 9891 1848

Phantom Zone, 268 Crown Street, Wollongong, NSW. 2500. Mon-Fri 9-6, Sat-Sun 9-4 (imp, back, books, merch, manga, RPG, models) (0061) 2 4228 7393

AUSTRIA

Comic Treff, Getreidemarkt 2-4, 1010 Vienna. Mon-Fri 10-7, Sat 10-1 (US imp, back, manga, gn, CCG, foreign, cards) (0043) 11 586 76 27

BELGIUM

Forbidden Zone, 25 Rue de Tamines, 1060 Brussels (3 floors; imp, back, merch, US/French, STO, toys). E-mail: cedric@forbiddenzone.net Website: www.forbiddenzone.net (0032 2) 534 63 67 (fax 538 24 52)

CANADA

Connection MD, 1539 Van Horne Ave, Montreal, Quebec H2V 1L4. Mon-Sat 11-6 (new, merch, back, videos, CCG, cards, toys). E-mail: cmd@ colba.net Website: www.colba.net/~cmd/index.html (00)1 514 948 2627

Little Shop of Heroes, 160 Wallace Avenue, S. Listowel, Ontario N4W 1X9 (all sorts of cards) (00)1 519 291 2281

Silver Snail, 2374 Yonge St, Toronto. (new, back, merch)(00)1 416 481 4152

FRANCE

Album, 67 boulevard St Germain, 75005 Paris. Mon-Sat 10-8; Sun 12-7 (imp, back, gn) (0033) 53 10 00 60

Album, 6 rue Dante, 75005 Paris. Mon-Sat 10-8; Sun 12-7 (imp, back, graphic novels) (0033) 43 54 67 09

Alpha Omega, 25 rue de la Clef, 59800 Lille. Mon-Sat 10-12.30/2.30-7.30 (imp, back, French, RPG, cards, gaming: L5R, Star Wars, Star Trek, Babylon 5, Doomtown, Highlander, Mythos, Vampire, Tomb Raider, wants lists, buy-sell-trade) (0033) 320 319 375 (fax 320 559 054)

Astro City, 22 rue Masurel, 59800 Lille. Mon 3-7.30; Tue-Sat 10-12.30, 2-7.30 (imp, manga, toys, cards, merch, kits, UK and French titles) (0033) 320 55 1010 (fax 2838)

Impact Comics, 64 rue Condorcet, 75009 Paris. Mon-Sat 11-7.30 (imp, back, toys, trading cards, model kits, CCG) (0033) 42 80 30 10

L'Antre des Dragons, 56 rue de Loup, 33000 Bordeaux. Mon-Sat 10-1 & 2-7 (US imp, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, trading cards, merch, video) E-mail: dragons@atlantel.fr (0033) 55 65 17378

Les Nageurs de Sable, 14 rue Courte-line, 37058 Tours. Mon-Sat 11-1/2-7 (imp, back, cards, merch, manga, video, film/TV) (0033) 2 47 39 52 40

Pulps, 14 bld Morland, 75004 Paris. Mon-Sat 11-7 (imp, back, cards, toys, RPG) Website: http://members.aol.com/ryr95/pulps.html (0033) 1 42 72 55 25

GERMANY

Black Dog Comics, Rodenberg Strasse 9, 10439 Berlin. Mon-Fri 11-6.30, Sat 11-2 (US imp & back, gn, trading cards) (0049) 30 4473 6486

Grober Unfug, Zossenerstrasse 32-33, 10961 Berlin. Mon-Sat 11-7 (US imp & back, manga, gn, CCG, merch, trading cards) (0049) 30 6940 1490

GREECE

Metropolis Comics, 94 Metropoleos St, 54622 Thessaloniki. Mon-Sat 10.30-3.30/7.30-11.30 (US imp & back, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, trading cards, merch, foreign). E-mail: metrocom@classic.diavlos.gr (0030) 3 193 7775

Solaris, 6 Botasi Str, 10682, Athens. Mon/Wed/Sat 9-3.30, Tue/Thu/Fri 9-2.30/5-8.30 (US imp, back, manga, gn, tr/cards, merch) (0030) 1 384 1065

HOLLAND

Henk Lie's Comics & Manga Store, Zeeduk 104, 1012BB Amsterdam. Mon-Sat 11-6; Sun 11-9 (US comics, manga, cards, toys, merch, CCG, sci-fi) (0031) 20 421 3688 (fax 427 5422)

HUNGARY

Troll Kepregenyta'r, Terez Krt 13, Budapest 1067. Mon-Fri 10-6, Sat 10-1(US imp, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, trading cards, merch) (0036) 1 322 6026

IRISH REPUBLIC

Forbidden Planet (FPS), 5 Crompton Quays, Dublin 2. Mon-Sat 10-6 (Thurs 10-7); Sun 12-5 (imp, back, indies, merch, u/g, UK, gn, STO) (0035) 3167 10688

ITALY

Avalon, via Battisti 9/b, Bologna. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10.30-1/2-7.30 (US imp, back, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, trading cards, merch) (0039) 051 234459

Avalon, via Pedriali 21, Forli. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7 (US imp, back, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, trading cards, merch) (0039) 0543 33523

Avalon, via Settembrini 20, Milan. Mon 3.30-7.30, Tue-Sat 11-7.30 (US imp & back, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, trading cards, merch) (0039) 022 9400410

Avalon, via Foscolo 3, Padova. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7. (US imp, back, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, trading cards, merch) (0039) 049 658290

Avalon, via Bissolati 68, Rome. Mon 3-7, Tue-Sat 10-1/2-7 (US imp, back, manga, gn, CCG, trading cards, merch)

Avalon, via Magenta 0, Torino. Mon 3.30-7, Tue-Sat 10.30-1, 2-7.30 (US imp, back, manga, gn, RPG, CCG, merch, trading cards) (0039) 011 5617252

Il Marchio Giallo, via Deghi Scipioni 116, Rome. Tue-Sat 10.30-1/2-7.30 (US imp, back, European, manga, merch, kits) (0039) 06 361 40 60

La Borsa del Fumetto, via Lecco 16, 20124 Milano. (US imp, back, European and manga, RPG, CCG, trading cards) (0039) 11 5617252

MALAYSIA

The Mind Shop, Starhill Shopping Centre, Jalang Bukit Bintag, Kuala Lumpur. Mon-Sat 11-10 (US, toys, videos, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 241 8871

The Mind Shop, S 58 Bandar Utama, Petaling Jaya. Mon-Sat 11-10 (US, toys, videos, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 719 8246

The Mind Shop, Jin SS21/39, Petaling Jaya. Mon-Sat 11-10 (US, toys, videos, CCG, RPG, merch) (00603) 717 6602

PORTUGAL

BdMania/Chiado, Rua das Flores 67-71 R/C, 1200 Lisboa. Mon-Sat 11-7.30 (US imp, back, manga, CCG, merch, toys, sci-fi, video). E-mail: pricosta@p.pt Website: www.interzona.pt (00351) 1 346 1207

BdMania/Olivais, Bedeteca de Lisboa, Palacio de Contador-Mor, Rua Cidade de Lobito, 1800 Lisboa. Mon-Sat 11-7 (US imp, back, graphic novels, manga, CCG, toys, merch, sci-fi)

BdMania/Boavista, Centro Comercial Brasilia, Loja 203, Rua Luis Veaga Lertao 98-120, 6050 Porto. Mon-Sat 11-11 (US imp, back, graphic novels, manga, CCG, toys, merch, sci-fi). E-mail: com@interzona.pt (00351) 2 609 1460 (fax 2 953 8532)

SOUTH AFRICA

Euroniag, Shop 79A, East Rand Mall, Boksburg, Johannesburg. Mon-Sun 9-10 (US imp, back, manga, gn, CCG, cards, merch) (0027) 11 896 3773

Zed Bree's Comic Universe, Mediterranean Building, 24 Tenth Ave, Edenvale 1610 Gauteng. 9.30-6 (imp, manga, trading cards, merch, gn, CCG) 002711 453 4215 (fax 453 4459)

SPAIN

Gigamesh, RDA San Pedro 53, 08010 Barcelona. Mon-Sat 10-1.30/4.30-8 (US imp, gn, manga, RPG, CCG, merch) (0034) 3 246 6359

SWEDEN

Comics Heaven, Stora Nygatan 23, 11127 Stockholm. Mon-Fri 10-6.30, Sat 11-6, Sun 12-4 (US imp, US back, gn, merch) (0046) 8 202516

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The letters **(FPS)** after entries indicate that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet (Scotland) Ltd**

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVALS

A listing of the world's major comics festivals and conventions. For further information, call the organisers on the phone, fax or e-mail numbers provided. To view updates, contact them on their websites. Organisers' estimates of their previous year's attendance is given in brackets.

July 20-21: CANADA

ANIMECAP CONVENTION (A.C.C), Toronto. (First). Organisers: AnimeCap Convention, 2-848 Burnhamthorpe Rd North, PO Box 12008, Mississauga ON L5C 2SO. Website: http://www.geocites.com/cap_con

July 20-23: UNITED STATES

COMIC-CON INTERNATIONAL '00, San Diego California. (1999 est: 40,000). Organisers: Comic-Con International, PO Box 128458, San Diego, CA 92112-8458. Tel: 001 619 491 2475. Fax: 001 619 544 0743 Website: www.comic-con.org

July: GERMANY

COMIC SPLASH, Berlin. (Previous: unknown) Organisers: Jochen Enterprises, Mockernstrasse 78, 10965 Berlin, Germany. Tel/Fax: 0049 30 786 7019. Website: http://www.jochenenterprises.de Date: TBA

August 4-6: UNITED STATES

WIZARD WORLD CHICAGO CON. (1999 est: 32,000) Organisers: Wizard Press, 151 Wells Ave, Congers, NY 10920-2064. Tel: 001 608 226 0200. Website: http://www.wizardworld.com

August 26-27: SCOTLAND

MEMORABILIA '00, The SECC, Glasgow. (1999 est: 7,742) Organisers: Made in Heaven, 1 Star Street, Moffat, Dumfriesshire DG10 9DR. Tel: 01683 220787 fax: 01683 220798. Website: http://www.memorabilia.co.uk

August: LUXEMBOURG

INTERNATIONAL COMICS FESTIVAL, Contern. (Previous: unknown) Organisers: Commune de Contern, 4 Place de la Mairie, L-5310 Contern, Luxembourg. Tel: 0035 2 35 02 61. Fax: 0035 2 35 90 39. Date: TBA

September 8-10: NORWAY

RAPTUS INTERNATIONAL COMICS FESTIVAL. (1999 est: 3850). Organisers: Raptus Bergen Comics Festival, PO Box 768, 5001 Bergen, Norway. Tel/Fax: 0047 55 55 83 90. E-mail: awa@hib.no Website: http://www.raptus.no

October 1-2: BELGIUM

FACTS. (previous: 5,500). Organisers: Forbidden Zone, 25 Rue de Tamines, 1060 Bussels, Belgium. Tel: 0032 2 534 63 67. Fax 0032 2 538 24 52. E-mail: cedric@forbiddenzone.net

October 14-15: LONDON

MEMORABILIA '00, Sandown Park, Surrey, London. (previous: unknown). Organisers: Made in Heaven, 1 Star Street, Moffat, Dumfriesshire DG10 9DR. Tel: 01683 220787 fax: 01683 220798. Website: http://www.memorabilia.co.uk

October 27-29: ITALY

LUCCA COMICS. (1999 est: 40,000) Organisers: Lucca Comics, Via della Cavallerizza 11, 55100 Lucca, Italy. Tel: 0039 0583 48522. Fax: 0039 0583 91203. E-mail: comic&games@lunet.it. Website: http://www.comune.lucca.it/COMICS

October 22-November 7: PORTUGAL

AMADORA '00. (1999 est: 36,000) Organisers: BD Amadora '00, Fabrica da Cultura, Rua das Industrias, 2700 Amadora. Tel: 00351 1 495 1857 Fax: 00351 1 498 2353. E-mail: bd.amadora@mail.telepac.pt

November 25-26: ENGLAND

MEMORABILIA '00, NEC, Birmingham. (Previous: 22, 462). Organisers: Made in Heaven, 1 Star St, Moffat, Dumfriesshire DG10 9DR. Tel: 01683 220787 fax: 01683 220798. Website: http://www.memorabilia.co.uk

November: FINLAND

THE HELSINKI COMICS FESTIVAL. (Previous: 5-10,000). Organisers: Finnish Comics Society, PO Box 927, FIN 00101 Helsinki, Finland. Tel: 00358 9 685 1000. Fax: 00358 9 270 90369. Internet: www.kaapeli.fi/~sarjaks. E-mail: hcf@kaapeli.fi Date: TBA

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• All private classified **Wants** or **Announcements** ads (comics or card related items only) are free of charge. Maximum 50 words, they will be printed at the publisher's discretion when space permits. *(Only one advertisement can be submitted per letter/per issue so everybody gets a chance to fit in!)*

•FOR SALE ads (and dealer wants/announcements) are charged:
(i) General announcements: Stating no issue numbers, prices or titles. Per 50 words (or part thereof) ..... £5.00 ($7.50 US)
(ii) List ads: (including specific titles, issues and/or prices. Minimum charge, per 100 words (or part thereof) ..... £10.00 ($15.00 US)

Payment (to Comics International) must accompany advertising copy.

***Comics International Classified**, 8 Trinity Road, London N2 8JJ*

FOR SALE

For sale: Silver Age books, many at 50% of dealer prices! **Uncanny X-Men** 94-376 – highlights include 94vf/+, 95vf-, 100vf+, 101vf, also 26 Byrne/Claremont issues in vf/nm. **Journey Into Mystery** 84-122 – highlights include 84vg+, 85vg+, 86f-, 87f-, 109f, 112vf-. **Thor** 127-406 – highlights include 129f/vf, 134f+, 154vf and 158vf-. Also nm Simonson **Thor** run at 50p each! Several issues of **The Incredible Hulk**, including 181vf/+. Most newer books are 50p-£1! Call Beltan on 020 8527 2791 and leave a message. Enquiries welcome!

For sale: Phenomenal Silver Age comics collection for sale. Includes **Fantastic Four** 1 – £795; **Hulk** 102 – £22; **Daredevil** 1 – £285; **Amazing Spider-Man** 50 – £45, **Avengers** 1 – £340 and **Uncanny X-Men** 94 – £80. Plus plenty of **Batman, Justice League, Silver Surfer, Journey Into Mystery, Spider-Man, X-Men, Strange Tales**, etc, etc... For full list of comics, grades and prices, send an sae to Paul Ellis, 18 Talgarreg Drive, Wepre, Deeside, Flintshire CH5 4GX. Tel: 01244 831235. E-mail: ellis.paul@talk21.com

For sale: Best offers accepted on a collection of early to mid '90s comics (single issues or bulk). Includes Marvel, DC, Image, Dark Horse, Valiant and Innovation titles – many early issues. Send an sae for list to David Tombesi-Walton, 7 Harringay Gardens, London N8 0SE. E-mail: david.tombesi-walton@dk.com

American comics for sale, including **X-Men, Wolverine, Cable, Spider-Man, Thunderbolts, Punisher, Marvel: The Lost Generation, Mutant X, Gambit, Hulk, Azrael, Batman, Batgirl, Catwoman, JLA, Starman, Batman: Legend of the Dark Knight, Superman, Superboy, Young Justice, Aria, Spawn, Rising Stars, Soul Saga, Tomb Raider, Warlands, Kin, Curse of Spawn, The Darkness, Witchblade, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Sin City, Star Wars, Hellboy, Concrete, Angel, Aliens, Gunsmith Cats, Lionheart, Evil Ernie, Liberty Meadows, Strangers In Paradise, More Than Mortal, Gatecrasher, Bone, Steampunk, Top Ten, Hellblazer, Sandman, Swamp Thing** and many, many more. For full list, send a large sae to Keith Baker, 9 Estcourt Road, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR30 4JG.

Comic and graphic novel collection for sale: Marvel, DC, independents and British titles at bargain prices. For full details, e-mail: vision.software@lineone.net or send a stamped sae to Mike Blenkiron, 15 Ambassador Gradens, Armthorpe, Doncaster DN3 3JW.

For sale: 1970s Marvel, DC and Charltons including nice obscure and popular titles; Mystery including **Beware, Chamber of Chills, Dead of Night, Fear, Frankenstein, Creatures on the Loose, Monsters on the Prowl, Tomb of Dracula, Werewolf by Night, Where Monsters Dwell, Vault Evil, War with GI Combat, O.F.F., Star Spangled, Weird War Tales, Superheroes**, most including **Superboy, Superman, Wonder Woman, Thor**, plus **Battlestar Galactica, Star Trek, Star Wars**, etc. Sharp grading (established 1986). For dynamic free list, write to Steve Rock, 4 Orme Drive, Clevedon, Avon BS21 7HD.

For sale: Over 500 Silver Age DC, Marvel and others. Many key issues in all grades. Over 300 Bronze Age in good to near mint condition. Also a selection of British comics and reprints from the early 1950s-1970s. For details, send an sae to Chris B. Waters, 40 Phoenix Court, Norreys Drive, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 3UT. Tel: 01628 825488

For sale: Thousands of DC and Marvels from the 1960s to the present. Absolute lowest prices! Also fantasy, horror, trade paperbacks, books and magazines. All very cheap! Send a large sae for one or both of my catalogues to A to Z Comics, 57 Rutland Street, Grimsby DN32 7RS.

Sale: Up to 50% discount on hot items. List includes **Arcanum** ½ (gold edition, signed by artist) – £12; **Aria** Preview – £5; **Ascension** (gold Heroes Con special) – £22.99; **Astro City** 1 – £8; **Buffy the Vampire Slayer** (Another Universe photo two) – £6; **Coven** 1 (America Entertainment) – £15; **Crimson** (Dynamic Forces premiere) – £12.50; **The Darkness** 15 (1st Magdalena) – £5, 16 (2nd Magdalena) – £5, 17 (3rd Magdalena) – £5 and 18 (4th Magdalena) – £5; **Elseworlds 80-Page Giant** – £150; **Lady Pendragon/Deity** (convention special) – £12; **Preacher** 1-18 – £100; **Warlands** 1 – £500 and many, many more waiting to be sold. Call Chris Bracek on 01942 746842. Mail: 7 Crown St, Poolstock, Wigan or www. cbcomics.com for list.

For sale: **Witchblade** 1-28; **The Darkness** 1-18 (plus tie-ins and crossovers, etc). Also **The Maxx** 1 – final copy. Plus other Image titles (**Glory, Avengelyne, Darkchylde**, etc). Contact Mrs Joan Tyne, 37 Holdsworth Ct, Commercial Street, Heckmondwike, West Yorkshire WF16 9RR. Tel: 01924 401932

WANTED

Advertisers are reminded that Wanted ads must be no longer than 50 words (including address), and only single insertion private advertisements can be published free of charge.

Wanted: Original artwork by Hampson, Bellamy, Turner (especially Daleks), Kirby, Ditko and Neal Adams. Buy or trade (I have three complete EC stories to trade). Good prices paid. Please contact Terry Doyle, 5 Alexandra Grove, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 5DZ.

Wanted: Back issues of **Toyfare**; issue 1, 1996 Winter Special Edition, 1997 Spring Special Edition and issue 34. Can anyone help? Also needed, old Spawn action figures for art project. Contact Mr P. Woodal, 61 Beechcroft Road, Chesham, Bucks HP5 2HP. Tel: 01494 778297. Mention the advertisement when calling or writing reply. Thanks!

Wanted: **Moebius Epic** trade paperback volume 7; **The Goddess and Incal** trade paperback volume 2. Very good prices paid for very good condition books. Contact Tim Stevenson on 01962 855663 or e-mail: stevensontj@yahoo.co.uk

Wanted: **TV Century21** issues 71-78; **Smash!** comics 1966-1970 in any condition. Replies to Howard Mitchell, 8 Collin Spring Court, Birstwith, Harrogate, Yorkshire HG3 3LN. Tel: 01423 772434

Wanted: **Superman** (Golden Press, 1979) 224 pages, $1.95; **Double Double** comics; British annuals (Madonna, Green Hornet, Rawhide, Bewitched and Mister Ed) wanted in top condition only! John Balfour, Westerstraat 67-3, Amsterdam, Holland 1015 LW.

Wanted: British original art by Frank Bellamy, Mike Noble, Don Lawrence, Gerry Haylock and Ron Turner. Very good prices paid for the best examples. Also wanted; any artwork by Neal Adams. Tel: 01689 898108

I know there must be someone out there who can help me find **Comics Buyers Guide** 1312, 1319, 1348 and 1355; **Comicology: The Kingdom Come Companion**; **Marvels** hardcover; **Life Book: Our Century in Pictures**. Postage at my expense. Contact me at e-mail: g_cicconi71@hotmail.com or Giulio Cicconi, Via Alberto Pepe 1, 64100 Teramo, Italy.

Wanted: **Battle Picture Weekly** 1-3 with free gifts; **Warlord** 1-4 with free gifts; **Action** 1-3 with free gifts; **Bullet** 1-3 with free gifts; **Mighty World of Marvel** (UK) 1-2 with transfers; **Avengers** (UK) 1 with transfers. Contact Danny on 020 8672 3169 or 0794 6380795. Will pay top dollar!

Wanted: Marvel; **Amazing Spider-Man** 1-38 (Ditko art) in vg/vg+; **Strange Tales** 1-168 (Ditko art) vg/vg+/fn-; **Tales of Suspense** 1-100 vg/vg+/fn-; **Tales to Astonish** 1-50 vg/vg+/fn-; **Journey Into Mystery** 1-146 vg/vg+/fn-. Charlton; **Blue Beetle** (IPC) 6 (Ditko art); **Captain Atom** 78; **Outer Space** (any Ditko issues); **Space War** (Ditko issues); **Space Adventures**, etc, etc. Reply to A. W. Sinclair, 21 Hickleton Court, Thurnscoe, Rotherham SG3 0QF.

Wanted: **Tom Puss Comics** (Birn Brothers, 1949), will pay £150; **Panda Comics** (same series, 1949), will pay £100; **Tom Puss in Rhymeland**, will pay £100. **Jack and Jill** all-colour giftbooks (edited by Annette Mills), will pay £40. Write to Piet Koudenburg, Cortenhoeve 14, 2411 JM Bodegraven, NL-The Netherlands.

Wanted: English 1950s space, horror, crime, superhero, jungle and western comics, including **Space Adventures, Spaceman, Whiz, Master, Nyoka, Captain Marvel, Black Magic, Comet, Marvelman, Planet, Crimson, Captain Valiant, Swift Morgan, Roy Carson, Mystery In Space, Marvel Family, Super Thriller, Speed Kings, Strange Worlds, Space Commando** plus similar 1940s and 1950s items. Write to Mike Morley, 5 Crompton Ave, Sprotboro Rd, Doncaster DN5 8ED.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fanzine and small press titles must not be offered for sale before being printed. To verify publication, a sample copy must be sent in along with the advertising copy (50 words max). Single bookings only, so everybody gets a chance!

Bionic Comics is one year old! Why not help us celebrate by sending us money? Available from the back issue box are: **Bionic Benny** 1-4 and **Parataxis** 1-7. Send a first class stamp for each book ordered to Peter Hammerson, 16 Cartmel Drive, Woodley, Reading, Berks RG5 3NG.

Our new website, www.Escapo.com has been launched! Escapo is an on-line distributor of creator published comics and fanzines. Providing an avenue for small publishers to sell their creations online, we have a discussion forum, and provide a portal to free e-mail addresses and web space. Check it out!

The Books of Terminus, a new Doctor Who fanzine featuring lavishly illustrated of the Doctor, the tardis, the daleks, the cybermen, the Master and more. Also featuring a full colour strip tale of the 8th Doctor. £3.95 from John A. Short, 20 Grants Avenue, Bournemouth BH1 4NR.

Free! **The Kaboom! Review**. Home of comics, sleaze and pies! Certainly not suitable for the easily offended. For your free copy, please e-mail your address to thekaboom review@hotmail.com or visit www.thekaboomreview.port5.com

CAOF Presents 16 out now! Bumper 36 page issue, featuring the final chapter of **Armoured Ant** plus stuff from Marc Olivent, Jake Howard and Chow! For your copy send a cheque to the amount of £1 payable to CAOF Comics, 10 Cleveland Avenue, High Ercall, Telford, Shropshire TF6 6AH.

Pagoda preview; action, adventure

BUY OR SELL OR EVEN TRADE

It's been tried and tested for almost ten years and it's still going strong...

Comics International's *Classified* section has turned more than one £5 "For Sale" advertiser into a big-time regular full page dealer.

One of the first-read sections of the magazine both for dealers and fans, *Classified* offers you the opportunity to add a new part time job to boost your existing finances.

Almost every comic fan has unwanted titles taking up valuable space...

..A loft which is in need of clearing.

...A spare room which is no longer spare.

...A garage which is pining for a car.

Classified can help you not only clear that space, but you earn money while doing so. More than 4,500 such ads have been placed on this page, with regular dealers coming back for more each month.

It costs you only £5 to place a 50-word For Sale general announcement. Or £10 to try a 100-word list ad, detailing issues and prices. Ads can appear within a week of you sending them in...

So, what are you waiting for? Everybody else to jump in first?

...It's down to you!

and martial arts. £1 from Tough Guy Productions, 14 Grant Close, Kingswinford DY6 7RH.

Leaflit: A whispered auto-psychography, a glimsped memory of hidden frustration, a remnant of death. 35p each – or £5 sterling for the complete 20 issue set (plus **Stripped Bare**, a bonus edition available only with the set). Orders under £1.50, please add 40p postage & packing. From John Robbins, 11 Avonmore Avenue, Tallaght, Dublin 24, Eire.

This is it! The *Chandler-Wilson* showdown explodes in **Mondo** 49! We've also got half-time action with *James & Brooks*. (Top babe pin-up too!) **Mondo** 49... Sci-fi, superheroes and pulp fiction... A mere pound! Cheques/postal orders payable to Lee Davis, 140 Amersham Avenue, Edmonton, London N18 1DY.

Strange Aeons, the Lovecraft fanzine issue 11 is out now! Featuring strip adaptation of **The Terrible Old Man**, plus original fiction, movie and music reviews. £2 from Calum McIvcer, 1 Brookside, Clachamish, Portree, Isle of Skye IV51 9NY. Will also swap for review copies of your fanzine!

Tales of Urban Horror, the first release from Ministry Comics is out now. A 28 page American format black & white anthology featuring three stories to make a night in alone somewhat uncomfortable. Available at only £1.70 (including p&p) from Ministry Comics, 7 Harrold Priory, Bedford MK41 0SD. E-mail: ministrycomics@aol.com Make cheques payable to J. Bonnie.

Galaxina and the Space Cadets 1, written by Dek Baker and illustrated by Darren Chandler is available now! Cover price 75p. 28 A5 pages. Also **The Book of Runes 1** – 40 A5 pages at cover price of £1. Buy both together for £1.50 from Darren Chandler, 2 Brook Cottages, Brook Street, Great Waldingfield, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 0RZ.

COMICS SOCIETIES

Join The Eagle Society, dedicated to the memory of Britain's National Strip Cartoon Weekly – **The Eagle** 1950-1969. For just £16 per year (cheques should be made payable to The Eagle Society) members receive our quarterly journal **Eagle Times**, as well as the chance to attend social gatherings and meet original **Eagle** contributors. Write to the membership secretary: Keith Howard, 25a Station Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 2UA, or e-mail: Richard.Sheaf@nestlegb.nestle.com

THE CARTOON ART TRUST, 7 Brunswick Centre, Bernard Street, London WC1N 1AF (registered charity, exhibition gallery and library, lectures, Friday evening cartoon classes, free newsletter. Send an sae for details) Tel: 020 7278 7172, fax: 020 7278 4234

COMICS CREATORS GUILD, 7 Brunswick Centre, Bernard Street, London WC1N 1AF (£30 annual subscriptions: Monthly meetings and newsletter, plus quarterly **Comics Forum** magazine)

THE SCOTTISH CARTOONISTS CLUB, c/o J & T Graphics, 61 Parnie Street, Glasgow

MAIL ORDER SPECIALISTS

Key to abbreviations used:

w/s = wholesale available
dis = bulk discount terms
cat = phone/write for catalogue
s-cat = sae for catalogue
wants = wants lists accepted
s-wants = sae with wants lists
CoBRA = Comic Book Retailers' mail order protection scheme
cc = major credit cards accepted
sae = send stamped, self-addressed envelope with your enquiry

When telephoning from outside the UK, drop the first 0 and replace with: 01144 (USA); 0044 (mainland Europe & Eire); 001144 (Australasia).

GOLDEN AGE

Generally acknowledged as being published between 1938 and 1945, the first age of superhero comics, but herein designated to cover all pre-Silver Age American comicbooks.

Comic Blz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Incognito, 1-2 The Friars, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2AS (s-wants, CoBRA, cc) tel/fax: 01227 785898

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax: 01244 680686)

Vault Comics, PO Box 257, South Norwood, London SE25 6JN (wants, cc, cat) 020 8771 8278

SILVER AGE

Accepted as starting in 1955 with DC Comics' superhero rebirth through Detective Comics #225 (introducing the Martian Manhunter) and Showcase #4 (introducing the Barry Allen Flash). Herein covering titles up to late 1960s.

Comic Blz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Cosmic Comics, PO Box 1771, London E17 9PW (cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 8527 7824

NEW **East Coast Comics UK**, 28 Acton Rd, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR33 7LG (high grade, s-want, cc, sae) 01502 578385 (day) 560727 (eve)

Incognito, 1-2 The Friars, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2AS (s-wants, CoBRA, cc) tel/fax: 01227 785898

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Quicksilver Comics, 9 George Street, Ossett WF5 9PB (s-cat, dis, wants, cc, CoBRA) 01924 315143

Silver Acre Comics, PO Box 114, Chester CH4 8WQ (s-wants, cc) 01244 680 048 (fax: 01244 680686)

Steve Rock Comics, 4 Orme Drive, Clevedon, Avon BS21 7HD (free cat-Silver to Bronze Age)

Vault Comics, PO Box 257, South Norwood, London SE25 6JN (wants, cc, cat) 020 8771 8278

POST-SILVER AGE

Comics from the 1970s to date: From the Bronze Age-Marvel Age-Lead Age up to Platinum Age-Gimmick Age-Image Age. Historians will doubtless eventually decide on a name.

Cosmic Comics, PO Box 1771, London E17 9PW (cat, cc, CoBRA) 020 8527 7824

DBF Comics Mail Order, PO Box 238, Weston Super Mare BS23 3FJ (s-cat, s-wants)

Mighty World of Comicana, 237 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2 (dis, cat, CoBRA, cc) 020 7836 5630

Planet Warehouse (FPS) *formerly Comics Warehouse* PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Rd, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

HOT COMICS

Current or key titles, first issues or first appearances of major characters. Investment titles for speculators willing to gamble.

K.R.B. Comics, 21 Banes Down, Nazeing, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 2NU (cat, sae, wants)

Sci-Fi Unlimited, 4 Clair Street, Lime Street, Bedford MK40 1NH (dis, wants, CoBRA, cc) tel/fax: 01234 365522

ADVANCE IMPORTS

US comics are not generally available in UK newsagents, except for some sea-freight shipped low-cover price DCs and Marvels, and can only be found through specialists in the rest of the world. The following companies offer air-shipped copies from all major US publishers.

Avalon Comics, 143 Lavender Hill, London SW11 5QJ (cc, CoBRA) 020 7924 3609

Forbidden Planet, 71 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1DG (s-cat cc) 020 7497 2150

Forbidden Planet (FPS), 63/64 High Street, Colchester, Essex (wants, cat, CoBRA, cc) 01206 561912

Gosh! Strips by Mail, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH 020 7636 1011

K.R.B. Comics, 21 Banes Down, Nazeing, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 2NU (cat, sae, wants)

Mega-City Comics, 18 Inverness Street, Camden Town, London NW1 7HJ (s-cat, cc, CoBRA) 020 7485 9320

Planet Warehouse (FPS) *formerly Comics Warehouse,* PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Rd, Maldon, Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

Red Hot Comics, The Warehouse Block D Unit 7, Glenwood Business Park, Glenwood Place, Glasgow G45 9UH (CoBRA, s-wants, sae, dis) tel/fax: 0141 630 0049

Time Zone, 31 Castle Street, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 2BW. (dis, cat, wants, cc) 01743 365192

LIMITED EDITIONS

Many high-profile mini-series and one-shots are also available in limited, numbered and often autographed editions (s&n). New titles, to acquire copyright, can also appear in small print-run "ashcan" editions (ash).

Comic Blz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (CoBRA, cc, ash, s&n, cat) 020 8446 3464

K.R.B. Comics, 21 Banes Down, Nazeing, Waltham Abbey, Essex EN9 2NU (cat, sae, wants)

TRADING CARDS

An increasing number of mail order dealers carry a wide range of non-sports trading cards and their peripherals (files, folders, sleeves, etc).

Beyond Comics, 76 Harlescott Road, Nunhead, London SE15 3BZ (s-cat, s-wants, sae, CoBRA) t/f: 020 7564 4213

Card Collectors, 3 Waterford Ave, Romiley, Stockport SK6 4HL (w/s, dis, cat, wants, CoBRA) t/f: 0161 427 1867

John McDonald: Nón-Sport Trading Cards, 20 Alder Grove, Coatbridge, Lanarkshire ML5 3PT (cat, wants) tel/fax: 01236 433358

Sci-Fi Unlimited, 4 Clair Street, Lime Street, Bedford MK40 1NH (dis, wants, CoBRA, cc) tel/fax: 01234 365522

OLD BRITISH TITLES

The popularity of old British comics continues to increase as more dealers expand into this area. The following specialise in such titles.

Comic Blz, PO Box 7041, London N12 9NF (wants, CoBRA, cc, cat) 020 8446 3464

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Conquistador Comic Art Mail Order, 158 Kent House Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1JY (wants, CoBRA, cat, cc) 020 8659 9714

Ken Harman Old Comics & Pulps (wants; call for details) 020 8771 8756

Weird Fantasy, 19 Decoy Road, Ormesby, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk NR29 3LG (s-cat, s-wants, annuals specialist)

MERCHANDISE

Comics and film/tv-related t-shirts, posters, video games, video films, badges, toys, etc.

Arkanes, PO Box 728, Swindon SN1 3UF (cat, wants: cult TV, RPG/CCG, Star Trek, Star Wars, Xena, Buffy...)

Off World: The Sci-Fi Store, Unit 20, Romford Shopping Halls, Market Place, Essex RM1 3AT. (specialists in Star Trek/Wars & sci-fi collectables) 01708 765633

Sci-Fi Merchandise Direct (FPS) and **Gear for Games (FPS)** Maldon, Essex CM9 4XD (cat) 01621 877222

Sci-Fi Unlimited, 4 Clair Street, Lime Street, Bedford MK40 1NH (dis, wants, CoBRA, cc) tel/fax: 01234 365522

Time Zone, 31 Castle Street, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 2BW (dis, cat, wants, cc) 01743 365192

ART & REFERENCE

Comics history reference magazines & books (ref) plus art books (art) and newspaper strip compilations (strip).

Conquistador Comic Art Mail Order, 158 Kent House Rd, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1JY (wants, CoBRA, ref, art, strip, cat, cc) 020 8659 9714

ORIGINAL ART

With artists having their originals returned by publishers, an increasing number of pages are now being made available for collectors.

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Conquistador Comic Art Mail Order, 158 Kent House Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1JY (wants, CoBRA, cat, cc) 020 8659 9714

PERIPHERALS

Acid-free protection for comics. Backing boards, bags, storage boxes, etc.

Incognito, 1-2 The Friars, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2AS (s-wants, CoBRA, cc) tel/fax: 01227 785898

Just Comics, 2 Crossmead Ave, Greenford, Middlesex UB6 9TY (wholesale only, Collectorline™ distributor) 020 8578 1308

Planet Warehouse (FPS) *formerly Comics Warehouse,* PO Box 600, 8 Galliford Rd, Maldon; Essex CM9 7XD (w/s, cat, cc, CoBRA) 01621 877244

GENERAL FANTASY

As well as comics old and new, some suppliers also provide catalogues of multi-media fantasy, covering TV, film, trading cards and toys.

Forbidden Planet Mail Order, 71 New Oxford St, London WC1A 1DG (cat) 020 7497 2150 (fax: 020 7497 2632)

Sci-Fi Merchandise Direct (FPS) and **Gear for Games (FPS)** Maldon, Essex CM9 4XD (cat) 01621 877222

MANGA TITLES

English language translations of Japanese comics and US titles drawn in the Japanese style.

Sci-Fi Unlimited, 4 Clair Street, Lime Street, Bedford MK40 1NH (dis, wants, CoBRA, cc) tel/fax: 01234 365522

United Publications, 85 Croydon Road, Keston, Kent BR2 8HU (ind, back, cat, wants, cc) 020 8325 9507

ALTERNATIVE & BIOG

The following carry an extensive range of biographical and slice-of-life comics and graphic novels (Fantagraphics, Maus, Crumb, Pekar...)

Gosh! Strips by Mail, 39 Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3PH (wants) 020 7636 1011

Knockabout Comics, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (w/s, s-cat, cc) 020 8969 2945 (fax: 020 8968 7614)

Page 45, 9 Market Street, Nottingham NG1 6HY 0115 9508045

COMICS AUCTIONS

Accepting lots from the general public, comics auctions can provide an alternative way for collectors to sell their valuable comics. The following accept items for sale, as well as providing regular catalogues for mail order bids.

Comic Book Postal Auctions Ltd, 40-42 Osnaburgh Street, London NW1 3ND (cat) 020 7424 0007

Vault Comic Auctions, PO Box 257, South Norwood, London SE25 6JN (cc, cat) 020 8771 8278

DISTRIBUTORS

Anybody considering opening a comics shop or becoming a mail order dealer can obtain further information about the supply of titles from the following who bulk air-import US and European comics and related items on a weekly basis:

Book Palace, 81 Church Rd, Crystal Palace, London SE (graphic novels, art books, comics, remainders, film/TV, popular culture) 020 8768 0022

Diamond Comic Distributors, PO Box 250, London E3 3LT (US & European comics, cards and related items) 01925 401 1400

Red Route Distribution, Unit 24, 10 Acklam Road, London W10 5QZ (US & European comics/graphic novels, back-list specialists) 020 8960 5855

Mail Order Dealers:

CI's Mail Order Index is the industry's most cost-effective and highly-targeted way to reach a huge dedicated audience in excess of 40,000 readers every month. It costs only £4 ($6 US) per entry per issue to appear and is bookable in advance as a 6-issue series. Send pre-payment of £24/$36 (plus £4.20 VAT for UK advertisers) per category with your details to:

Comics International, 8 Trinity Road, London N2 8JJ

Cheques and international money orders should be made payable to Comics International. Alternatively, payment can be made by credit card, fax: 0(11 44) 20 8883 0302 or e-mail. Comics@Quality.win-uk.net

The letters **(FPS)** after entries indicates that the company is part of **Forbidden Planet (Scotland) Ltd**

HALLMARKS

While Frame To Frame *deals with the interaction between film/TV and comics, in this column Phil Hall looks at the latest developments in fantasy film and TV. Genre projects which may create the next wave of comics.*

Buffy *BUFFY the Vampire Slayer* creator Joss Whedon is to write and direct the current season finale, which will be a much more introspective, intimate episode about Buffy and the Scooby gang.

The finale deals with everything that happens over the previous month as the team comes to terms with some shattering events. The last episode also acts as an epilogue to the Adam storyline, which will culminate the week before when Buffy finds herself trying to survive a code red situation at The Initiative's underground base.

Unofficial sources have indicated that Whedon is in the process of developing a second *Buffy* spin-off series. Originally believed to be a series about Willow's former boyfriend, the werewolf called Oz, it now looks like Whedon is going head-to-head with Shannen Docherty's series *Charmed*. The new series is expected to be a magic based show about a coven of Wicca witches led by Willow (Allyson Hannigan). *(more info: www.buffy.com)*

Star Trek ANTHONY Stewart Head, *Buffy*'s Giles, reads the new audio-book edition of **Star Trek: The Next Generation – The Valiant**. Written by Michael Jan Friedman, the Simon & Schuster release chronicles young Starfleet Lieutenant Jean-Luc Picard's adventures aboard the USS Stargazer. *(more info: www.simonsaysaudio.com)*

Ultraviolet BRITISH vampire mini-series *Ultraviolet* will air on the US Sci-Fi Channel from July 31st. A pilot for a US series based on the mini starring *This Life*'s Jack Davenport is also in the works at Fox for an autumn release. The cast includes Madchen *(Twin Peaks)* Amick, Spence Decker, Joanna Going and Idris Elba. *(more info: www.scifi.com)*

Scooby-Doo **HOLLYWOOD Reporter** has revealed that the Warner Bros live-action *Scooby-Doo, Where Are You?* film is back on the fast track. Screenwriter James Gunn recently turned in his draft for the film, and the studio is reportedly still trying to lure Mike *(Austin Powers)* Myers to play Shaggy. *[Scooby and Shaggy, right]*

Shadows EIGHTIES minor heart-throb Andrew *(Pretty in Pink)* McCarthy will lead the cast of *Shadows*. The feature-length supernatural thriller about an architect refurbishing a London dance hall haunted by 21 ghosts, may be spun off into a series if successful.

Jessica Oyelowo, Kevin Tighe, Clabe Hartley, Amanda Redman and renowned Brit thesp Ian Richardson also star. *(more info: www.fxnetwork.com)*

Dracula **VARIETY** reports that Christopher *(The Sound of Music)* Plummer will play vampire hunter Abraham Van Helsing in *Wes Craven Presents: Dracula 2000*.

Futurama THE SEASON finales for Matt Groening's two hit animated series have been announced. Physicist Stephen Hawking, Nichelle Nichols (Uruha in *Star Trek)*, and Vice President Al Gore have their voices featured on the *Futurama* finale, in which The Professor invents a What If machine that looks at the wishes of Bender, Leela, and Fry.

Continuing the trend for even weirder and more bizarre episodes of *The Simpsons*, there's a *Behind the Laughter*-styled finale, which explores how fame and fortune tore Homer, Marge, Bart, Lisa, and Maggie apart off-screen, and how Quincy Jones brought them all back together. Also included: How characters such as Montgomery Burns *[left]* act when not in front of the camera. *(more info: www.thesimpsons.com)*

Andromeda Production has begun on *Gene Roddenberry's Andromeda*, an upcoming series starring Kevin *(Hercules)* Sorbo as the leader of a rag-tag crew of freedom fighters trying to save a war-torn universe.

Keith Hamilton Cobb, Brent Stait, Gordon Michael Woolvett, Laura Bertram, Lexa Doig and *Earth: Final Conflict*'s Lisa Ryder also star. Sky One has bought the option for the first UK screening. *(more info: www.andromedatv.com)*

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EVENTS GUIDE

*An at-a-glance guide, this listing gives the dates and locations of all forthcoming events advertised in this issue of **CI**. It includes a bracketed number after each entry noting the page where the advertisement with the event's full details appears.*

JUNE

3/6 **BIRMINGHAM:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Church Centre, Carrs Lane ..... (p44)
4/6 **CROYDON:** Sci-Fi, Comic & Beanie Fair, Fairfield Halls, Barclay Road ..... (p50)
4/6 **LONDON:** The National Comicbook Marketplace and Card Mart, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p66)
10/6 **GLASGOW:** Scottish Comic, Card & Collectables Fair, James Moir Hall (Mitchell Theatre) Granville Street ..... (p58)
10/6 **SHEFFIELD:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Main Hall, Sheffield Hallam University ... (p44)
11/6 **CARDIFF:** Comic, Card & Sci-Fi Mart, Angel Hotel, Westgate Street ..... (p54)
11/6 **MILTON KEYNES:** Sci-Fi, Comic & Beanie Fair, Stantonbury Leisure Centre, Saxon Gate, Milton Keynes ..... (p50)
17/6 **NEWCASTLE:** Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria, Students' Union Ballroom, Sandyford Road ..... (p44)
18/6 **READING:** Sci-Fi, Comic & Beanie Fair, Rivermead Leisure Gentre ..... (p50)
24/6 **MANCHESTER:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street ..... (p44)
25/6 **BRISTOL:** Comic, Card & Sc-Fi Mart, Jurys Hotel, Prince Street ..... (p54)
25/6 **LIVERPOOL:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Gladstone Hotel, Lord Nelson Street ... (p44)
25/6 **WATFORD:** Collector's World '00, Watford Leisure Centre ..... (p25)

JULY

1-2/7 **ASCOT:** Collector's Fair 2000 with special guests, Ascot Racecourse, Berks ... (p19)
1/7 **LEICESTER:** Comic Mart & Card Show, City Halls, Hotel Street ..... (p44)
2/7 **CHESHUNT:** Sci-Fi, Film & Comic Fair, Grundy Park Leisure Centre ..... (p50)
2/7 **LONDON:** Comicbook Marketplace, Camden Centre, Bidborough Street ..... (p66)
8/7 **LEEDS:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds ..... (p44)
9/7 **BASILDON:** Sci-Fi & Card Fair, Basildon Sports Centre ..... (p25)
15/7 **NOTTINGHAM:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Victoria Leisure Centre ..... (p44)
16/7 **CHELMSFORD:** Sci-Fi, Comic & Beanie Fair, Riverside Ice & Leisure Centre .. (p50)
16/7 **LONDON:** Card Mart, Camden Centre, Bidborough Street, London ..... (p40)
16/7 **WEYMOUTH:** Comic, Card & Sci-Fi Fair, Rembrandt Hotel, Dorchester Road . (p54)
22/7 **BIRMINGHAM:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Church Centre, Carrs Lane ..... (p44)
23/7 **BASILDON:** Jedicon Star Wars Event with special guests, Posthouse Hotel .... (p25)
23/7 **CARDIFF:** Comic, Card & Sci-Fi Mart, Angel Hotel, Westgate Street ..... (p54)
29/7 **NEWCASTLE:** Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria, Students' Union Ballroom, Sandyford Road ..... (p44)
30/7 **LONDON:** Comic, Card & Related Mart, The TUC Congress Centre, 23-28 Great Russell Street, London ..... (p67)
30/7 **MILTON KEYNES:** Sci-Fi, Comic & Beanie Fair, Stantonbury Leisure Centre, Saxon Gate, Milton Keynes ..... (p50)

AUGUST

5/8 **HULL:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Comfort Friendly Inn, Anlaby Road ..... (p44)
5/8 **MANCHESTER:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street ..... (p44)
6/8 **LONDON:** Comicbook Marketplace, Camden Centre, Bidborough Street ..... (p66)
12/8 **LEEDS:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds ..... (p44)
13/8 **BASILDON:** Sci-Fi & Card Fair, Basildon Sports Centre ..... (p25)
13/8 **BRISTOL:** Comic, Card & Sc-Fi Mart, Jurys Hotel, Prince Street ..... (p54)
13/8 **WOLVERHAMPTON:** Molineux Leisure Centre, Waterloo Road ..... (p50)
19/8 **NOTTINGHAM:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Victoria Leisure Centre ..... (p44)
20/8 **LONDON:** Card Mart, Camden Centre, Bidborough Street, London ..... (p40)

SEPTEMBER

2/9 **BIRMINGHAM:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Church Centre, Carrs Lane ..... (p44)
3/9 **LONDON:** Comicbook Marketplace, Camden Centre, Bidborough Street ..... (p66)
9/9 **LEEDS:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Leeds Metropolitan University, Brunswick Hall, Merrion Way, Leeds ..... (p44)
10/9 **CHELMSFORD:** Sci-Fi, Comic & Beanie Fair, Riverside Ice & Leisure Centre .. (p50)
23/9 **MANCHESTER:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Sachas Hotel, Tib Street ..... (p44)
24/9 **CARDIFF:** Comic, Card & Sci-Fi Mart, Angel Hotel, Westgate Street ..... (p54)
24/9 **CROYDON:** Sci-Fi, Comic & Beanie Fair, Fairfield Halls, Barclay Road ..... (p50)
24/9 **LIVERPOOL:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Gladstone Hotel, Lord Nelson Street ... (p44)
30/9 **SHEFFIELD:** Comic Mart & Card Show, Main Hall, Sheffield Hallam University ... (p44)

OCTOBER

1/10 **LONDON:** The National Comicbook Marketplace and Card Mart, The Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way ..... (p66)
8/10 **WEYMOUTH:** Comic, Card & Sci-Fi Fair, Rembrandt Hotel, Dorchester Road . (p54)
14/10 **NEWCASTLE:** Comic Mart & Card Show, University of Northumbria ..... (p44)
22/10 **WATFORD:** Collector's World '00, Watford Leisure Centre ..... (p25)
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29/10 **LONDON:** Comic, Card & Related Mart, The TUC Congress Centre, 23-28 Great Russell Street, London ..... (p67)

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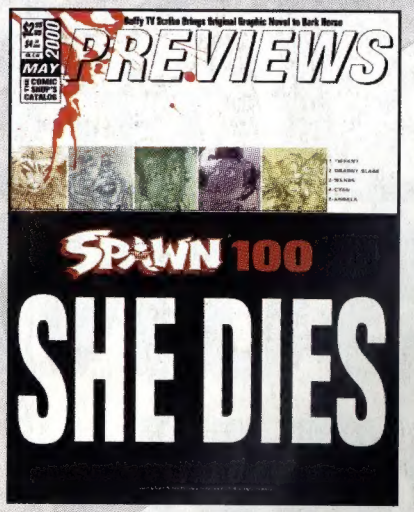

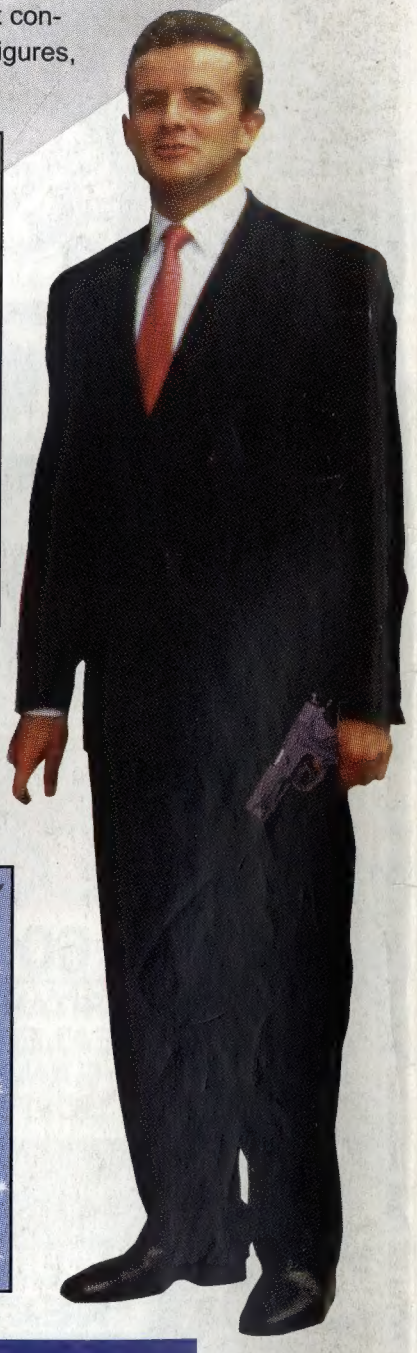

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